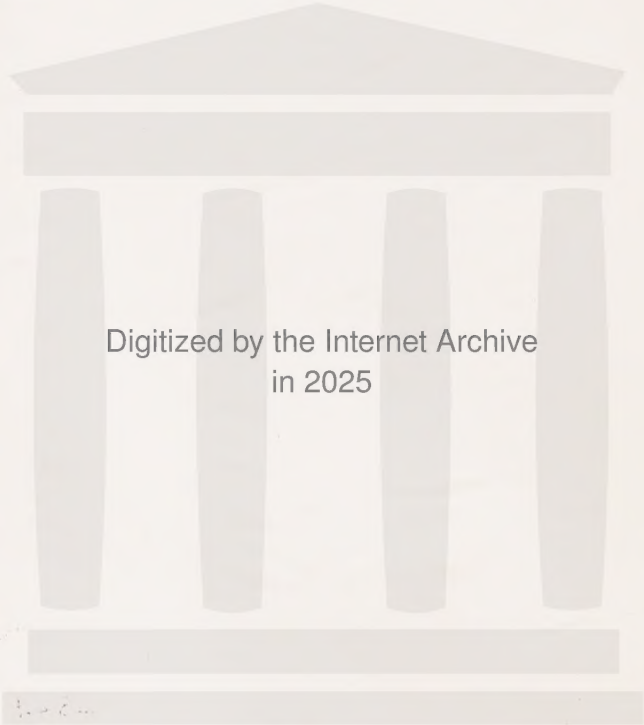

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A PAROCHIAL COURSE OF DOCTRINAL INSTRUCTIONS

FOR ALL SUNDAYS AND HOLYDAYS OF THE YEAR

Based on the Teachings of the Catechism of the Council of Trent and Harmonized with the Gospels and Epistles of the Sundays and Feasts

PREPARED AND ARRANGED BY

THE REV. CHARLES J. CALLAN, O.P.

AND

THE REV. JOHN A. McHUGH, O.P.

Professors in the Theological Faculty of Maryknoll Seminary, Ossining, N.Y.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE MOST REV. PATRICK J. HAYES, D.D.

Archbishop of New York

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Archbishop of New York

New York, November 24, 1920

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In high commendation of the Program contained in this Course the Holy Father through His Secretary of State has written his Grace, the Archbishop of New York, the letter of which this is a fac-simile.
Translation on third page following.

SEGRETERIA DI STATO
DI SUA SANTITÀ

DAL VATICANO, 14 Febbraio 1921

N° B.16728
DA CITARSI NELLA RISPOSTA

Illmo e Revmo Signore.

Compio l'incarico di portare a conoscenza della S.V. Illma e Revma che il Santo Padre ha gradito vivamente il devoto omaggio che Ella recentemente Gli faceva di una copia del "Programma per un Corso Parrocchiale di Istruzioni Dottrinali per tutte le Domeniche e feste dell'anno" fatto pubblicare dalla S.V. per i Sacerdoti di codesta Archidiocesi

Sua Santità si è assai compiaciuta nel rilevare come il Corso di Istruzioni Dottrinali risponde mirabilmente, per le qualità che l'adornano, allo scopo prefissosi dalla S. V. quando nelvolle affidata la cura della redazione alla Commis-

Illmo e Revmo Signore
Monsignor Patrizio Hayes
Arcivescovo di New York
ROMA

zione Archidiocesana " De culto divino " ed a due espertissimi scrittori dell'Ordine Domenicano; lo scopo, cioè, di riuscire di efficace aiuto e come di guida ai Reverendi Parroci, i quali nei giorni festivi hanno l'obbligo, durante le Messe lette, di spiegare il Santo Vangelo ai fedeli.

Non è certo a dubitare che nel Corso predetto i Reverendi Parroci dell'Archidiocesi, i quali hanno contribuito essi stessi alla migliore riuscita dell'opera con i loro saggi pareri, troveranno come un amico fedele che anche nei giorni di maggiori fatiche offrirà loro un materiale sintetico, ma sufficiente, per un ' ottima istruzione dommatica e morale al popolo; materiale, d'altronde, che potrà essere sempre ampliato qualora essi vogliano giovarsi dei risultati della propria esperienza o trar profitto della notevole bibliografia che accompagna sempre lo svolgimento di ogni singolo soggetto.

E' superfluo poi aggiungere che il pregio dell'opera è accresciuto dal fatto che essa è stata divisata e condotta in intima armonia coll'ammirabile Catechismo del Concilio Tridentino.

Il Santo Padre, pertanto, mentre si augura che codesto Clero farà unanime uso di un sì pregevole Corso di Istruzioni, loda altamente lo zelo con il quale la S.V. e quanti La coadiuvarono nel difficile compito, si sono adoperati per chè il buon popolo catto-

lico dell'Archidiocesi di New York ritragga i più ubertosi frutti di grazia dalle spiegazioni Evangeliche dei giorni festivi.

Nell'AggiungerLe che Sua Santità, in pegno di particolare benevolenza, impart con tutta l'effusione del cuore alla S. V. nonchè al Clero ed ai fedeli affidati alle diLLei cure, l'Apostolica Benedizione, mi valgo dell' incontro per rinnovarLe i sensi della mia più distinta stima con i quali passo a rassegnarmi

della S.V.Illma e Revma

affmo per servirLa

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(*Translation*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF HIS HOLINESS

THE VATICAN
Feb. 14, 1921.

THE MOST REV. PATRICK J. HAYES,
ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK.

Your Grace:

I have the honor to inform you that the Holy Father highly appreciates the courtesy you have recently shown in presenting him with a copy of the "Program for a Parochial Course of Doctrinal Instructions for Every Sunday and Holyday of the Year," which has been published by order of your Grace for the priests of your Archdiocese.

His Holiness is extremely pleased to notice how this Course of Doctrinal Instructions admirably realizes, through the qualities which adorn it, the purpose intended by your Grace when you entrusted its preparation to the Archdiocesan Commission "De Cultu Divino," and to two most expert writers of the Dominican Order; your aim being that this Doctrinal Course should be an efficient help, and, as it were, a guide to the Reverend Clergy, who, at low Masses on all Holydays of precept, are in duty bound to explain the Holy Gospel to the faithful.

There is no doubt that the Reverend Clergy of the Archdiocese, who by their wise counsel have contributed to the perfection of the work, will find in this Course a faithful friend which in the busy days of the ministry will afford them synthesized, but sufficient material for an excellent dogmatic or moral instruction to the people. Furthermore, these Outlines may always be amplified whenever the Clergy wish to draw upon their own personal experience, or to profit by the splendid bibliography which always accompanies the development of each subject.

It is superfluous to add that the value of the work is enhanced by the fact that it has been planned and executed in perfect harmony with the admirable Catechism of the Council of Trent.

The Holy Father therefore highly praises the zeal which your Grace and those associated with you in this difficult task have shown in order that the most abundant spiritual fruits might be brought to the good Catholic people of your Archdiocese by the explanation of the Gospels on Sundays and Holydays, and he sincerely trusts that the Clergy will unanimously make use of so valuable a Course of Instruction.

While adding that His Holiness, in token of particular benevolence, imparts, with all the effusion of his heart, the Apostolic benediction to your Grace, the Clergy, and the faithful confided to your care, I take this opportunity to renew the sentiments of my high esteem and to subscribe myself,

Yours most devotedly
PETER CARDINAL GASPARRI.

INTRODUCTION

No more timely and valuable contribution to the Catholic pulpit could possibly be made than the "Parochial Course of Doctrinal Instructions" prepared by Reverend Fathers Callan and McHugh, of the Order of Preachers, in conjunction with our Diocesan Commission on Preaching, to which I entrusted, some time ago, the working out of a practical and uniform Program of doctrinal and moral exposition for the entire Archdiocese of New York.

I am more than gratified and consoled at the exceptionally splendid result, in the appearance of the Program, already in use in New York, and of the present volumes as a companion work in the larger development of the subject matter outlined in the Program.

It is quite evident that the authors and compilers realized that the quest for the passing new in preaching lessens, if it does not altogether destroy, the zest for the basic old in the Church's treasury of the Word. Hence, the Catechism of the Council of Trent, the Encyclical of Pius X,[1] and that of Benedict XV,[2] have been studied most carefully and followed in the preparation of these volumes.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent is presented within these pages in a revised English version and with suitable arrangement and division as to chapter and subject. The Catechism is but too little used to-day, though in the Church it has the unique distinction of holding a place, as it has been said, "between approved Catechisms and what is *de fide*." It is the fruitage of years of labor and discussion, subsequent to the closing of the Council of Trent, and was issued for the use of parish priests by order of Pope Pius V in 1566. Leo XIII writing[3] to the French Episcopate calls it "the golden book, the *Catechismus ad parochos* — a precious summary of all theology both dogmatic and moral." Cardinal Newman[4] says: "I rarely preach a sermon, but I go to this beautiful and complete Catechism to get both my matter and my doctrine."

[1] Acerbo nimis, April 15, 1905.
[2] Depuis le jour, Sept. 8, 1899.
[3] Humani generis, June 15, 1917.
[4] Apologia pro vita sua, chap. v, p. 280.

The IV Lateran Council says: *Ignorantia est mater cunctorum errorum.* Ignorance of Catholic doctrine is the cause of most of the bigotry and misunderstanding found among non-Catholics. Ignorance of their own religion among Catholics themselves is largely responsible for the unworthy Catholic whom worldliness estranges from God and the practice of religious duties. Even practical and devout Catholics need constant instruction lest they should stumble into serious doctrinal error. Most of us, even those who "ought to be masters, have need to be taught again what are the first elements of the words of God" (Heb. v. 12).

There is a threefold knowledge of God: the first, by the natural light of human reason from the contemplation of the material creation; the second, by the supernatural light of faith through divine revelation; the third, by the heavenly light of glory in the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision. Supernatural faith aids human reason in the interpretation of the visible universe, and opens up, beyond our physical senses and intellectual powers, the vista of the heavenly hills in the Kingdom of Glory, where we shall see God face to face and possess Him for all eternity. The intellect is the lamp that must be kept steadily burning to guide the will, a blind faculty, which makes choice for us between good and evil, wisdom and folly, truth and error.

The urgent necessity of knowing the doctrine of Christ as taught by His Church should appeal to all, especially now, when the human mind, bewildered as it is to-day with shattered hopes and broken standards, is groping in darkness within its own natural sphere of thought and action. The learned and the great, as well as the unlettered and the lowly, must gather as little children at the feet of Christ and hearken to His message of eternal life. The right worship of God, the right way of thinking of God, and the right manner of living for God, should be the supreme aim of everybody.

Sublime then is the office of the Preacher of the Word; and urgent is the need of special grace for the lips that speak divine wisdom. No amount of proximate preparation can overcome the lack of remote preparation on the part of the clergy. *Nemo dat quod non habet* is axiomatic. Unless a spirit of prayer and piety, and a faithful study of divine sources enter into the mind and heart of the teacher of God's Word, the sacerdotal unction and the prophetic fire will be sadly wanting in one who is no other than "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal," to use the words of the inspired Paul (1 Cor. xiii. 1). Guard we must our preaching from the carnal, the secular, and the pragmatic spirit of our times. The holiest of men may easily dull and lose spiritual force in preaching, and even slip into dogmatic error, if press, maga-

zine, and novel, which ignore Christ and His Church, are dominant informing forces in one's daily reading.

May the Holy Ghost bless our Catholic pulpit with power and unction, that, in the highest and truest sense, "the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet" (Jer. xviii. 18). May we all, bishops and priests, fulfil the promise of God to the Prophet Jeremias (iii. 15): "And I will give you pastors according to my own heart: and they shall feed you with knowledge and doctrine."

✠ PATRICK JOSEPH,
Archbishop of New York.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception,
1920.

PREFACE

THE purpose which prompted the preparation of the Outlines and the arrangement of the contents of the present work was to make most available for practical use in parochial preaching the Catechism of the Council of Trent, and thereby to realize more fully and more perfectly the high end for which that extraordinary book was written. To this admirable Catechism, and to the illustrious Encyclicals of Popes Leo XIII (Sept. 8, 1889), Pius X (April 15, 1905), and Benedict XV (June 15, 1917), our minds at once reverted as soon as we learned that his Grace, the present Archbishop of New York, wishing in his zeal for souls and for the glory of God to guard the Catholic pulpit against the dangers of our times and to stimulate an interest in the pure teachings of Christ and the Church, had determined to introduce throughout his Archdiocese an official Program of doctrinal instructions, covering all the teachings of our holy faith. And when, through his Grace's Synodal Commission *De Cultu Divino*, we, among others, were invited to submit ideas and a plan for such a Program, it seemed to us that nothing better, nothing more useful, could be suggested or achieved than carefully to work out the wishes and directions of the Fathers of Trent and of subsequent Soverign Pontiffs on the subject of parochial preaching. This thought appeared the more engaging since the work prepared by the Bishops and theologians of Trent was not for any single age or generation, but for all time to come, building as they did on the foundations of the Prophets and the Apostles, with Christ as their corner-stone.

Upon submission of this plan to his Grace, he was not long in giving it his hearty approval and in requesting us to work it out under the supervision of his Commission *De Cultu Divino*, presided over by the Very Rev. Dr. Joseph H. McMahon.

It was really not a new idea, but, so far as we know, the first serious scheme for the complete and practical working out of an old and splendid conception of enduring value. This will at once appear from a glance at the history and at a few of the appreciations of the Roman Catechism, on the one hand, and from the briefest consideration of our plan on the other hand.

In April, 1545, only a few months after the opening of the Council of Trent, it was decided by the Bishops and theologians

of that illustrious assembly that an official book should be prepared for the guidance of pastors and all those charged with preaching and with the instruction of the faithful. It was plain that an explanation of the truths of revelation was always necessary; but at that time, more than ever in preceding ages, it seemed imperative that the faithful should be thoroughly instructed in all the doctrines of faith, because the so-called Reformers had their false teachers and false prophets everywhere abroad, spreading their pernicious errors and endeavoring by all means in their power to turn souls from the way of truth. The need of a complete, popular, and authoritative manual was further heightened by the lack in many of the pre-Reformation clergy of a systematic knowledge and method of explaining the truths of faith, and a consequent neglect of instruction and lack of religious knowledge on the part of the faithful.

For some years the Council was occupied with other matters which demanded more immediate attention; but in February, 1562, after having defined and re-approved all the leading doctrines and teachings of the Church, the Fathers of the Council resolved that an official Catechism should be written which would treat, in a manner suited for parochial use, all those truths of Christian doctrine with which the faithful ought to be familiar, and upon which they are supposed to be instructed in particular on all Sundays and Feasts of obligation. Furthermore, it was the wish of the Fathers and authors of this great work, and of the Sovereign Pontiffs and Councils that subsequently approved it, that its contents should be so treated as to harmonize with the Gospels and Epistles of the Sundays and Feasts throughout the year. Thus the faithful, while being kept ever in touch with the person and life-giving words of Christ, would at the same time be constantly and thoroughly instructed in all the principal doctrines of that revelation which the Saviour has given to the world for man's salvation.

After several years of careful labor and numerous revisions, on the part of many Bishops and eminent theologians, the Catechism was brought to completion and issued for the use of parish priests by command of Pope Pius V, toward the end of the year 1566. Translations into the vernacular of every nation were ordered by the Council. No such complete and practical summary of Christian doctrine had appeared since the days of the Apostles. Bishops at once recommended it everywhere and urged their priests so constantly to use and study it for their preaching that its whole contents would at length be committed to memory. It was repeatedly recommended by Pope St. Pius V, and in five Councils held at Milan under St. Charles Borromeo it received the highest praise and commendation. Similar eulogy and com-

mendation were given it by Gregory XIII, the successor of Pius V, by Clement XIII, and in our own times by Leo XIII and Pius X. In short, from the time of its publication down to the present time many Pontiffs and Bishops, and a great number of provincial and diocesan synods in various countries, have vied with one another in celebrating the praises of the Catechism of Trent, and in commanding its use. A few of many testimonies may be useful here.

Speaking of the Catechism, Cardinal Valerius, the friend of St. Charles Borromeo, wrote: "This work contains all that is needful for the instruction of the faithful; and its matter is given with such order, clearness, and majesty that through it we seem to hear the Church herself, taught by the Holy Ghost, speaking to us. . . . It was composed by order of the Fathers of Trent through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and was edited by order of the Vicar of Christ."

Salmanticenses, the great Carmelite commentators on St. Thomas, paid the following high tribute to the Catechism: "The authority of this Catechism has always been of the greatest in the Church, because it was composed by the command of the Council of Trent, because its authors were men of highest learning, and because it was approved after the severest scrutiny by popes Pius V and Gregory XIII, and has been recommended in nearly all the Councils that have been held since the Council of Trent."

Antonio Possevinus, an illustrious Jesuit, and the professor of St. Francis de Sales, said: "The Catechism of the Council of Trent was inspired by the Holy Ghost."

In an Encyclical Letter to the Bishops and clergy of France, of Sept. 8, 1889, Pope Leo XIII recommended two books which all Seminarians should possess, and constantly read and study, namely, the *Summa* of St. Thomas and the *Roman Catechism*. Regarding the latter he said: "This work is remarkable at once for the richness and exactness of its doctrine, and for the elegance of its style; it is a precious summary of all theology, both dogmatic and moral. He who understands it well, will have always at his service those aids by which a priest is enabled to preach with fruit, to acquit himself worthily of the important ministry of the confessional and of the direction of souls, and will be in a position to refute the objections of unbelievers."

In his immortal *Apologia* Cardinal Newman writes: "The Catechism of the Council of Trent was drawn up for the express purpose of providing preachers with subjects for their sermons; and, as my whole work has been a defence of myself, I may here say that I rarely preach a sermon but I go to this beautiful and complete Catechism to get both my matter and my doctrine."

"Its merits," says Dr. Donovan, who first translated the Catechism into English, "have been recognized by the universal Church. The first rank which has been awarded the "Imitation" among spiritual books, has been unanimously given to the Roman Catechism as a compendium of Catholic theology. It was the result of the aggregate labors of the most distinguished of the Fathers of Trent, . . . and is therefore stamped with the impress of superior worth."

Dr. John Hagan, Vice-Rector of the Irish College in Rome, says: "The Roman Catechism is a work of exceptional authority. At the very least it has the same authority as a dogmatic Encyclical, — it is an authoritative exposition of Catholic doctrine given forth, and guaranteed to be orthodox by the Catholic Church and her supreme head on earth. The compilation of it was the work of various individuals; but the result of their combined labors was accepted by the Church as a precious abridgment of dogmatic and moral theology. Official documents have occasionally been issued by Popes to explain certain points of Catholic teaching to individuals, or to local Christian communities; whereas the Roman Catechism comprises practically the whole body of Christian doctrine, and is addressed to the whole Church. Its teaching is not infallible; but it holds a place between approved catechisms and what is *de fide*."

So much for a glance at the history of the Catechism and at a few of the distinguished tributes that have been paid it. Let us now briefly reflect upon the plan and contents of this present work.

In these four volumes we have treated all the subjects of the Catechism and of practical Christian doctrine, both dogmatic and moral, and have so arranged them that they fit in and harmonize with the Gospels and Epistles of the Sundays and Feasts, as the Fathers of Trent desired. Moreover, we have so distributed the matter, in harmony with the liturgy, that the first two volumes cover all dogmatic subjects in the space of one year, and the last two volumes similarly treat all moral subjects within the limits of a second year. Thus, by means of this course, every two years both clergy and laity, while being kept in close touch with the Gospels and Epistles, will be taken over the whole field of practical Christian doctrine. This plan, furthermore, is in perfect agreement with the directions of the New Code of Canon Law, which requires that the faithful on Sundays and feast days be especially instructed on all they must believe and do in order to be saved, and that the Sunday Gospel and Epistle should be a part of these instructions (cc. 1347, 1344).

Under each Sunday and Holyday there will be found four distinct divisions: an *Outline* composed by ourselves and based on

the teachings of the Tridentine Catechism, a *passage from the Catechism* in which the outline is developed, one or more standard modern sermons on the subject of the day, and many *references* to other modern and classic sermons, to St. Thomas and the theologians, to the liturgists, and to other authoritative works.

The *Outline* chooses a subject or text from the appointed Gospel or Epistle of the day. A brief Introduction then follows, giving the setting of the Gospel or Epistle and showing its connection with the analysis of the subject. The Analysis, which comes next, has two or three main points logically connected and subdivided so as to furnish ample thought for one or more sermons, and give the preacher a clear and comprehensive outline of the whole subject. The Conclusion, or Lessons, which follow the Analysis, contain practical deductions, drawn from the subject treated, and applied to every-day life.

Those who, in order to develop the Analysis of each day, desire further or other matter than that provided by the passages from the Catechism and the sermons that are given, will find abundant help and material through the references that are indicated for each day.

In addition, then, to the subjects treated by the Catechism of Trent, namely, the Articles of the Creed, the Commandments of God and the Precepts of the Church, the Sacraments, the leading Virtues and Vices, the Petitions of the Our Father, the Four Last Things, etc., — in addition to all these subjects we have included instructions on such doctrines as Papal Infallibility, the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, Indulgences, the Beatitudes, the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Ghost, etc., thus completing, if we may so speak, that noble Catechism by the inclusion of doctrines defined since its publication, and by the development of subjects to which it refers without giving a detailed explanation.

Every two years, therefore, according to the method adopted in this work, the faithful will be taken over the entire Catechism of the Council of Trent and every part of practical Christian doctrine without omissions or repetitions. The monotony of prolonged consecutive treatments of particular subjects and doctrines is obviated by the variety which is afforded; interest is thus stimulated and kept up; and while listening to the Gospels and Epistles of the Masses at which they are obliged to assist, the faithful will constantly and frequently be receiving instruction on all those things which they must do and believe in order to be saved, as the New Canon Law prescribes.

In the first volume of this work we were satisfied with a careful revision of Dr. Donovan's English translation of the Catechism. Only those changes were made which seemed necessary

for accuracy, simplicity, and clarity of statement. In particular it appeared needful to accommodate much of the phraseology and many of the words to present-day usage. But after this volume had gone to press the necessity of a substantially new translation of the Catechism from the original Latin occurred to us as distinctly advisable.

Accordingly in the three following volumes of this work we have deviated much more from the English of Dr. Donovan than in the first volume. At times, however, even here, we have found it unnecessary to depart much from the substance of the first English translator. It is therefore our hope, as it has been our aim, that the revision and translation given of the Catechism in these volumes will be found clear, exact, simple, and readable.

In conclusion we feel it a duty to express our gratitude to the *Homiletic Monthly* and its publishers for the privilege we have enjoyed, in preparing this work, of a generous and ready access to an unusual wealth of sermons. From the vast store of splendid productions that have graced the pages of that admirable Review for nearly a quarter of a century we have thus been able to select for each Sunday and feast day a great variety of the best of modern sermons. The distinguished names here quoted are their own guarantee and recommendation for loftiness of thought and solidity of doctrine, for beauty and eloquence of expression.

Charles J. Callan, O.P.
John A. McHugh, O.P.

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A PAROCHIAL COURSE OF DOCTRINAL INSTRUCTIONS

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

SUBJECT

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

TEXT

They shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with great power and majesty. — LUKE xxi. 27.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. The word "advent" means **coming.** The four weeks that follow are intended to be a season of preparation for Christmas, which was the first coming of Christ our Redeemer. To-day is also the first Sunday of the ecclesiastical year, and on this day, as on last Sunday, which was the final Sunday of the ecclesiastical year, the Church has appointed for our instruction a Gospel dealing with the second coming of Christ as Judge, in order that we may from the beginning to the end of the year bear in mind our judgment which is to come.

I. "From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead." 1. Christ has three offices: those of Redeemer, Mediator, and Judge. 2. There are two comings of Christ: the first in lowliness to redeem the world, the second in power to judge the world. 3. There are two judgments: the particular judgment at death, and the general judgment at the end of the world.

II. The general judgment. Last Sunday we explained the circumstances of the general judgment, to-day we assign the reasons for it: 1. Only at the last day can the total results of good or evil be known. 2. A general judgment will be the means of rectifying the injustices of life and of vindicating the ways of God's providence. 3. By means of a judgment following

the resurrection the body will have part in the rewards or punishments of the soul. 4. The sentence pronounced at the general judgment will be a public and solemn ratification of the private sentence at the particular judgment.

III. The particular judgment. 1. This takes place at the moment of death — "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after death, the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). 2. There is a similarity between the end of the world and the death of the individual: (a) both are certain — "my words shall not pass" (Luke xxi. 33); (b) the time of both is uncertain — "the day and the hour no man knoweth" (Matt. xxiv. 36); (c) both are accompanied by temptations and tribulations — "there shall arise false Christs," etc., "the sun shall be darkened," etc. (Matt. xxiv. 24, 29). 3. The similarity between the particular and the general judgments: (a) it is the same person with his whole life who is judged in both cases; (b) the sentence is irrevocable in both cases.

Conclusion. 1. The importance of frequent reflection on death and of constant preparation by vigilance against temptation and by prayer for perseverance. 2. Preparation for a favorable judgment by judging oneself now, by refraining from judging others, by performing works of charity, etc. (Matt. xxv. 35–46). 3. For the just the thought of the judgment is a consolation, — "look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand" (Luke xxi. 28); "Come, Lord Jesus" (Apoc. xxii. 20).

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article VII of the Creed

From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead

THE THREE OFFICES OF CHRIST

Jesus Christ is invested with three eminent offices and functions: those of Redeemer, Patron, and Judge. But as in the preceding Articles it is shown that the human race was redeemed

by His passion and death, and as by His ascension into heaven it is manifest that He has undertaken the perpetual advocacy and patronage of our cause, it follows that in this Article we set forth His character as Judge.

MEANING OF THE ARTICLE ON THE LAST JUDGMENT

The scope and intent of the Article is to declare that on the last day He will judge the whole human race. The Sacred Scriptures inform us that there are two comings of Christ, — the one when He assumed human flesh for our salvation in the womb of a virgin; the other when He shall come at the end of the world to judge mankind. This coming is called in Scripture "the day of the Lord." "The day of the Lord," says the Apostle, "shall come, as a thief in the night";[1] and our Lord Himself says, "Of that day and hour nobody knoweth."[2] In proof of the last judgment it is enough to adduce the authority of the Apostle: "We must all," says he, "appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil."[3] Sacred Scripture abounds in testimonies to the same effect, which the pastor will meet everywhere throughout the Inspired Volume,[4] and which not only establish the truth of the dogma, but also place it in vivid colors before the eyes of the faithful. And, if from the beginning, the "day of the Lord," on which He was clothed with our flesh, was sighed for by all as the foundation of their hope of deliverance, so also, after the death and ascension of the Son of God, the second "day of the Lord," we should make the object of our most earnest desires, "looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God."[5]

TWO JUDGMENTS

But with a view to the better explanation of this subject the pastor is to distinguish two distinct periods at which every one must appear in the presence of God, to render an account of all his thoughts, words, and actions, and receive sentence accordingly

[1] Thess. v. 2. [2] Matt. xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 32. [3] 2 Cor. v. 10.
[4] 1 Kings ii. 10; Isaias ii. 12, 19; xiii. 9; Jerem. xxx. 23; Dan. vii. 9; Joel ii. 1. [5] Tit. ii. 13.

from the mouth of his judge: the first, when each one departs this life; for then he is instantly placed before the judgment seat of God, where all that he had ever done or spoken or thought during life shall be subjected to the most rigid scrutiny; and this is called the particular judgment: the second, when on the same day and in the same place all men shall stand together, before the tribunal of their judge, that in the presence and hearing of a congregated world each may know his final doom, — an announcement which will constitute no small part of the pain and punishment of the wicked, and of the remuneration and rewards of the just, when the tenor of each man's life shall appear in its true colors.

WHY A GENERAL JUDGMENT

This is called the general judgment; and it becomes an indispensable duty of the pastor to show why, besides the particular judgment of each individual, a general one should also be passed upon the assembled world.

FIRST REASON

The first reason is founded on circumstances that must augment the rewards or aggravate the punishments of the dead. Those who depart this life sometimes leave behind them children who imitate their conduct, dependents, followers, and others who admire and advocate the example, the language, the conduct of those on whom they depend and whose example they follow; and as the good or bad influence of example, affecting as it does the conduct of many, is to terminate only with this world, justice demands that in order to form a proper estimate of the good or bad actions of all a general judgment should take place.

SECOND REASON

Moreover, as the character of the virtuous frequently suffers from misrepresentation, while that of the wicked obtains the commendation of virtue, the justice of God demands that the former recover, in the presence and with the suffrage of a congregated world, the good name of which they had been unjustly deprived before men.

THIRD REASON

Again, as the good and the bad perform their good and bad actions not without the co-operation of the body, these actions belong also to the body as their instrument. The body, therefore, should participate with the soul in the eternal rewards of virtue or the everlasting punishments of vice; and this can only be accomplished by means of a general resurrection and of a general judgment.

FOURTH REASON

Next, it is important to prove that in prosperity and adversity, which are sometimes the promiscuous lot of the good and of the bad, everything is ordered by an all-wise, all-just, and all-ruling Providence. It is therefore necessary not only that rewards and punishments should await us in the next life, but that they should be awarded by a public and general judgment. Thus they will become better known and will be rendered more conspicuous to all, and in atonement for the querulous murmurings, to which on seeing the wicked abound in wealth and flourish in honors even the Saints themselves, as men, have sometimes given expression, a tribute of praise will be offered by all to the justice and providence of God. "My feet," says the Prophet, "were almost moved, my steps had well nigh slipped, because I had a zeal on occasion of the wicked, seeing the prosperity of sinners"; and a little after: "Behold! these are sinners, and yet abounding in the world, they have obtained riches; and I said, Then have I in vain justified my heart, and washed my hands among the innocent; and I have been scourged all the day, and my chastisement hath been in the morning."[1] This has been the frequent complaint of many, and a general judgment is therefore necessary, lest perhaps men may be tempted to say that God, "walking about the poles of heaven,"[2] regards not the earth. Wisely, therefore, has this truth been made one of the twelve articles of the Christian creed, that should any be tempted to doubt for a moment, their faith may be confirmed by the satisfactory reasons which this doctrine presents to the mind.

[1] Ps. lxxii. 2, 3, 12–14. [2] Job xxii. 14.

FIFTH REASON

Besides, the just should be encouraged by the hope, the wicked appalled by the terror, of a future judgment; that knowing the justice of God the former may not be disheartened, and dreading His eternal judgments the latter may be recalled from the paths of vice. Hence, speaking of the last day, our Lord and Saviour declares that a general judgment will one day take place, and describes the signs of its approach, that seeing them, we may know that the end of the world is at hand.[1] At His ascension also, to console His Apostles, overwhelmed with grief at His departure, He sent Angels, who said to them: "This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven."[2]

Sermons

The Second Coming of Christ

BY THE REV. F. X. McGOWAN, O.S.A.

There is probably no truth in the whole body of Christian doctrine that has excited more strongly the hopes and fears of humanity than the doctrine of the First and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ on earth. His First Coming was eagerly watched for by His chosen people, and it was fraught with all the blessed confidence that the long night of four thousand years had fostered in men's souls. When, however, it dawned upon a benighted world, it brought reprobation to the Jewish people. But it cast light upon outside nations, and it was weighted down with the grace of redemption to the Gentiles. "Blindness in part hath happened in Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in" (Rom. xi. 25).

The Second Coming of Christ on earth bears with it a significance even as important as His First Coming. For men have reason to fear that when their conduct shall be weighed in the scale of Divine justice, they will be held to a severe account, and will incur the wrath of the eternal Judge.

Ever since the days of Christ opposition has been manifested against the acceptance of the doctrine which teaches a future gen-

[1] Matt. xxiv. 33. [2] Acts i. 11.

eral judgment. The carnal-minded Jews could not brook such an idea, because Jesus proclaimed Himself the Judge. The early heretics emulated the pagans in deriding what appeared to them as an impossible event. The same repugnance is to be found in our late days. Men laugh to scorn the awful judgments of God.

We might classify the opponents of the doctrine of a general judgment as "the proud infidel," "the sensual epicurean," and "the earthly materialist."

The proud infidel is so self-sufficient that he will not admit a personal God, because he wants to deify his own intelligence; or if he does not exclude the idea of a God, he either identifies God with himself or makes God the universe around him. To the infidel the general judgment is a fable, a myth.

The sensual epicurean is as equally opposed to a general judgment as the self-willed infidel. His god is his belly, according to St. Paul, and he lives simply to pander to passion and to satisfy appetite. He desires no general judgment, because this lower life is his elysium.

The earthly materialist is so wedded to the world and its interests that he cannot perceive anything beyond this life. He worships Mammon, and, according to the Gospel, he cannot serve God. The materialist is in strong evidence in our American life. He never thinks of God and His judgments. His time is wholly occupied with gigantic speculations, with vast projects for self-aggrandizement. In practice, the materialist seems not to believe in a last accounting day when Christ shall judge the hearts of men.

But God in His goodness has preserved the knowledge of judgment day in the deposit of faith which He bequeathed to His spouse, Mother Church, and His revelation lives and throbs in Catholic hearts despite the infidelity of men and the perversity of nations. Let us glance at —

I. *The certainty of a General Judgment.*

II. *The reason for a General Judgment.*

I. When we say the Apostles' Creed we confess the event of judgment day, on which Jesus Christ shall "judge the living and the dead." In the Nicene Creed we acknowledge that Jesus Christ "ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, and

is to come again with glory to judge the living and the dead." In the Athanasian Creed we say: "At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give an account of their own works."

The certainty of a General Judgment is proved: 1. From the Law of Nature; 2. From the Old Testament; 3. From the New Testament.

1. That there will be at the end of time a general judgment over which Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, will preside was well known from the earliest ages. The judgment, with its awful sentence, pronounced in Eden, was a type and a reminder of the day of the Lord when all nations and the world of all ages shall be summoned before the tribunal of Christ. This truth is indicated in many passages of the Old Testament, but these were badly understood or entirely ignored by the Jewish people. A full knowledge of what both patriarch and prophet meant in their deliverances on this subject was reserved for the Christianity of later days. Before the Written Law was given to Israel, the patriarchs both saw in spirit and taught in word the event of the universal judgment. It was announced by the patriarch Enoch, the seventh from Adam: "Behold," he said, "behold the Lord coming with thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to reprove all the ungodly for all the works of their ungodliness, whereby they have done ungodly, and of all the hard things, which ungodly sinners have spoken against God." Here direct reference is made not only to the Lord's judgment, but also to the majesty and pomp which will attend it. Job, who was a Gentile, and who lived in the period between Abraham and Moses, thus being altogether uninfluenced by the legislation of the latter, testifies also to the universal judgment of the Lord. "What shall I do when God shall rise to judge? and when he shall examine, what shall I answer him?" (Job xxxi. 14). Again he says: "Who will grant me this that thou mayst protect me in hell, and hide me till thy wrath pass?" (Job xiv. 13). We see that before the Written Law had been promulgated, the knowledge of the Day of Judgment was apparent among the peoples of the earth. It may have had a connection with the spiritual promise of the Messiah. The patriarchs certainly

knew of it, and we shall see how later the prophets spoke of it in terms that are distinct and even elaborate.

2. The testimonies relative to the General Judgment are numerous in the Old Testament, and therefore we are permitted the liberty of selection. In the spirit of prophecy Anna, the mother of Samuel, said: "The adversaries of the Lord shall fear him, and upon them shall be thunder in the heavens: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, and he shall give empire to his king, and shall exalt the horn of his Christ" (1 Kings ii. 10). Here we have a direct allusion to the judgment day of the Lord, with its fear and trembling and the exaltation of Jesus Christ, who shall triumph over His enemies in the majestic environment of the day of His justice. Isaias, whose language and style are most elevated, also paints in glowing colors the dread conditions of judgment day: "Enter thou into the rock, and hide thee in the pit from the face of the fear of the Lord and from the glory of his majesty. The lofty eyes of man are humbled . . . and the Lord alone shall be exalted on that day. Because the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and high-minded, and upon every one that is arrogant, and he shall be humbled" (Is. ii. 10–13). Again, this prophet calls the day of the Lord "a cruel day, and full of indignation and of wrath and fury, to lay the land desolate and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (Is. xiii. 9).

The prophet Ezechiel foretells the harrowing scene of the universal judgment: "The end is come, the end is come upon the four quarters of the land. . . . I will send my wrath upon thee, and I will judge thee according to thy ways; and I will set all thy abominations against thee" (vii. 2, 3). The prophets Joel (ch. ii.), Malachias (ch. iii), and the wise man (Wisd. i. 5) make use of similar language; they portray judgment day as a day full of anguish; they call it a day of wrath, of distress, of sorrow and pining, a day of darkness, on which, as it was shown to Daniel in a vision, the four kingdoms typified by the four animals shall be destroyed, wiped out in a solemn manner, and transferred to the saints of the Most High, who will reign forever and who will command the homage of all earthly kings (Daniel vii).

3. This truth revealed to the patriarchs in the law of nature

and to the prophets in the written law has been communicated to us in the law of grace by our Blessed Saviour Himself. He has particularized the meaning of this important event. He spoke to unwilling ears when He announced the day of His Second Coming to judge mankind; the Jews wilfully misunderstood Him and they maliciously corrupted Scripture to persevere in their blindness. We who have been born of the New Covenant acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the true God and true man, and we know that though heaven and earth may pass away, His words shall not pass away (Matt. xxiv. 35). "The Son of man," He declares, "shall come in the glory of his Father with his Angels: and then will he render to every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27). Again, He warns us: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn: and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty" (Matt. xxiv. 30). What a solemn, impressive spectacle! "When the Son of man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty: and all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats" (Matt. xxv. 31–32). We may not know the exact day when the Lord shall come to judge mankind, but we know the issue of that day: the Lord will call His elect to everlasting happiness, and He will send unhappy reprobates to never-ending misery.

II. God does not demand of us that we serve, love, and obey Him without giving us forcible reasons for so doing. The holy Fathers give many reasons for the necessity of a General Judgment. We select four principal ones that will enlighten us as to God's dispensation regarding this solemn event.

1. One of the reasons given by the Fathers of the Church for the General Judgment is to show with what justice Jesus Christ rewards the good and punishes the wicked in the particular judgment. We may remark here that the Saviour is in no way bound to justify His conduct before His subjects. He is master absolute, and we are in His hands, as says the Apostle, like clay in the potter's hands (Rom. ix. 21). It is only through pure

condescension on His part that He will make known to us the motives that have led Him to pronounce sentence on mortals as He has done. He will expose these reasons in such a just and intelligent way that the reprobate will acknowledge the justice of their condemnation. He will convince all that He has not wounded justice in the punishment of the wicked, nor overpassed the limit of equitable generosity in the reward of the righteous.

2. Another reason for the General Judgment is to make known the means of salvation which have been offered to every one of us in particular, and the manner in which we have employed them. Let us look over our past lives and consider the graces which we have received: graces which were common to the parish in which we lived, graces which were entirely personal, given solely for our benefit. Review in thought the sermons and instructions to which we have listened and the salutary counsel which we have received from God's ministers in the tribunal of Penance. Think how often conscience has upbraided us and placed before our frightened gaze the picture of unrepentant death, and how often, too, we were so moved that we cried out: "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). God has threatened, caressed, invited, urged, implored, and chastised us. The day of judgment will disclose our indifference towards grace, our actual abuse of grace, even our rejection of grace.

3. A further reason for a General Judgment is to make a solemn reparation to souls unjustly oppressed and a solemn proclamation of the good works of the righteous. On earth, the good are mingled with the wicked, and their good deeds, for many causes, are never viewed in an impartial light. They are persecuted by the wicked, and the latter seem to prosper while the former endure adversity. God will right all these wrongs on judgment day, and the wicked who received their reward on earth will be banished from the kingdom of heaven, while the good shall have as their eternal portion happiness without end.

4. The fourth reason we adduce for the holding of the Last Judgment is to confound the reprobate with their sins and crimes. What will be the confusion of the wicked when they shall see that they could have merited eternal felicity, but lost it by delib-

erate, wilful malice and deception! All their sins will be disclosed; their hypocrisy, deceit, and rashness laid bare as clear as the noontide's sun.

Let us anticipate this "great day of the Lord" by treasuring up merit in heaven. The judgment of God is a terrible thought. It has frightened even the saintliest souls. St. Jerome could do nothing — work, write, or pray — without imagining that he heard the voice of the trumpet and the angel saying, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." St. Augustine confessed that it was the fear of God's judgment that deterred him from committing many sins.

We should make the judgment day of the Lord the burden of our daily thought. If we fail to catch its meaning and to be moved by its awful conditions, we shall become in God's sight only maimed and broken men, struggling desperately with issues that must determine the future. Let us wring from its reflection the secret of better and holier lives. Let us learn from it the lesson of shaping our souls to a profitable newness of life.

The Particular Judgment

BY THE REV. P. HEHEL, S.J.

Taking into contemplation to-day the particular judgment, let us ask:

I. When shall this particular judgment take place?

II. Where shall it be held?

I. We must know before all that there will be a twofold judgment, — a particular and a general judgment. God will hold for every man a particular or secret judgment. This is the teaching of the Apostle, as well as the teaching of the holy Fathers. St. Thomas says clearly, "Besides the particular judgment, which takes place directly after the death of every man, there will also be a general judgment." And again: "As soon as the soul leaves the human body, it is irrevocably assigned to an abiding place. It receives its judgment — either for life or for death, according to its works." All its thoughts, words, and actions during life will be judged in accordance with the way they presented themselves to God at the moment when they happened.

Consequently, this particular judgment takes place at the time when we depart from this life, at the very moment when the soul is separated from the body. "It is a most reasonable and wholesome belief," writes St. Augustine, "that the souls are judged at the time when they are separated from their bodies, before they come to that judgment by which they will be judged again, after they have been reunited with their former bodies." To prove this, the same holy father relates the parable from the Gospel, in which Christ tells of the rich Dives and the poor Lazarus. The Scripture says of these two, that the rich man, as soon as he died, was thrown into hell, while the pious Lazarus was, after his death, borne by the angels into the bosom of Abraham. From this St. Augustine draws the conclusion, that undoubtedly it cannot depend upon the mere will of man after death whether he shall go to heaven — if this were so they would all want to go there — and it is just as reasonable that nobody would, of his own free will, go into hell and subject himself to the thraldom of the devil. If, then, the rich Dives was thrown into hell immediately after death and the pious Lazarus was taken to heaven, it follows, necessarily, that immediately after death the soul of every man will be judged in particular, and after this judgment be assigned either to heaven or to hell. If this judgment was postponed until the last day or the day of the general judgment, then on the one hand the just souls would be left in unceasing anxiety, not knowing whether they would pass the judgment, and on the other hand the godless would still be left in the hope of being saved. Therefore, for a long time there would be no difference between the two; both would linger between fear and hope, as neither of them would be sure whether they were to be saved or lost. And this is contrary to the justice of God, who cannot allow those who have offended Him to be treated the same as those who have served Him.

Therefore, it is certain that at the moment of our death our soul will be judged in accordance with our merits, judged for all eternity. Eternal life or eternal death will be the unalterable decision. Oh, what a terrible moment, upon which the whole of eternity depends! Who would not quake and tremble at this and keep it unceasingly before his mind, as no one can tell the day

or hour of his death, and therefore does not know how soon he may be called before this judgment. Therefore our future judge admonishes us kind-heartedly and cordially, when He says, "Watch ye therefore, for you know not when the Lord of the house cometh: at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing or in the morning" (Mark xiii. 35). So much of the time when this particular judgment will take place.

II. As regards the place where this judgment shall be passed, we must not think that the souls are carried up to heaven and there placed before the throne of God. No, a stained soul will never, in all eternity, have the happiness of feeling even for one moment the delights of heavenly joys; each soul will receive its judgment at the same place where the body happened to be at the time of death, be it on water or on land, in bed or in the street, on the mountain or in the valley, in the fields or in the house. For God is everywhere. For this reason can He, without calling the soul into heaven or having to descend Himself from heaven, pronounce His judgment over each one for eternal life or death at the place where it became separated from the body and make the soul cognizant of such judgment.

At this judgment Jesus Christ shall appear as Judge, the soul as the accused, the angel who was its guardian as advocate, and the devil as accuser. The latter will bring forward everything that the soul had committed during its life on earth in thought, word, or deed against God, against itself and against its neighbors, either in intent or in reality. He will — and this should be borne well in mind — bring forward not only the evil which has been committed, but also the good deeds which the soul might have done and which it left undone or did badly. When St. Charles Borromeo was on his death-bed, he said to the priest who attended him, "Reverend brother, I am afraid to appear before the judgment more on account of the good which I have left undone than the evil I have done." And yet, what a pious and holy life had Borromeo led! How many good deeds this man had done during his whole life! Remember, often, that you will be accused by the devil and condemned by Christ not only for sins committed, but also for good deeds omitted.

Against this accuser there is given to each soul an advocate,

that angel, namely, who was its true companion and guardian during its pilgrimage through life. He on his side will also bring forward everything good the soul has done. Every good thought, every sigh, breath, or step, which was done with a pure intention for the love of God or our neighbor will be recorded. He will try to cover the imperfections of these works with the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, and will, to frustrate the efforts of the accuser and move the judge to mercy, remind the latter of the most precious blood which He has shed for each accused soul.

The witnesses at this judgment will be the clear and unerring perception which each soul will have in the most perfect degree. As clear as the sun will appear before its eyes the actions of a lifetime. All covering will be withdrawn and the soul will see all its words, its works and thoughts, its good and evil deeds in their true light as they appeared in the eyes of God. It will see, whether it is rich in merits or poor, whether it is worthy of heaven or deserving of hell. In this clear self-recognition one's own conscience will give testimony either for or against, and convicted by its own conscience, the soul will not be able to offer excuses but will make a most complete confession. Thereupon, the Judge, who is none else than He who was our Redeemer, will by virtue of His Divine power, His omniscience and justice, render without delay the irrevocable sentence, which will be life or death for all eternity. If we are declared as blessed, we shall also be deemed worthy of heaven on the second and general judgment day; but if the verdict decrees our eternal perdition, we shall receive the same sentence at the last judgment.

"Oh, how dreadful it is to fall into the hands of the living God." And with each minute this terrible moment comes nearer and nearer. Every minute may bring us the verdict, "Eternal life" or "Eternal death." For we do not know whether we shall not be in the next moment a prey of death. With great earnestness St. James reminds us, therefore, "Behold the judge standeth before the door" (James v. 9).

Yes, my dear friends, He stands before our door, before your door, and before my door! As soon as he enters, the time of activity is passed and He demands an accounting of our lives. What will be our fate?

In conclusion, I will mention to you three thoughts of the holy abbot Elias to ponder over. He used to say: "There are three things I am afraid of. The first is when my soul will separate from my body; the second, when I shall have to appear before God my Judge; and the third, when judgment will be passed on me." Remember well these three points. He who will think over them several times a day will lose all desire to do evil.

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NOTE: In these References the titles of sermons are given only when they are not substantially the same as the subject of the day.

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

SUBJECT

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

TEXT

Hail, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. — LUKE i. 28.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. The extraordinary dignity and sanctity of the Blessed Virgin is made manifest in the words of to-day's Gospel. Since she was to become the Mother of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity it was not an ordinary messenger but an Archangel that was sent to announce to her this great dignity. And how worthy she was of such lofty honor the angel declares in his salutation. She is "full of grace," the abyss of all heavenly favors; "the Lord is with" her, she possesses holiness beyond all other creatures; she is "blessed among women," because, unlike all others, she was never subject to any sin.

I. The meaning of this dogma. 1. The Immaculate Conception does not refer, as some non-Catholics imagine, to the virgin birth of our Lord, nor to His sinlessness; neither does it imply on the part of the Blessed Virgin that her conception, like our Lord's, was divine, in the sense that it was without a human father. 2. The meaning of this doctrine is that, by a singular favor and privilege of God, and through the foreseen merits of her Son, the Virgin Mary, from the first instant of her conception in the womb of her mother, was preserved free from all stain of sin. 3. Original sin is that moral guilt and stain of soul which we inherit from Adam, the moral head of the human race. Sanctifying grace and many other extraordinary privileges were

conferred upon our first parents from their creation, but all these they lost through their sin; and the effect of their fall has descended upon all their posterity, with the exception of Christ, who was sinless by reason of the Hypostatic Union, and Mary, who was conceived immaculate by the special favor of God. 4. Hence the Blessed Virgin from the first moment of her conception was free from sin and endowed with sanctifying grace. Jeremias and John the Baptist were sanctified in their mothers' wombs and born free from original sin, but they were not conceived in this state. 5. The grace received by Mary in her conception was far superior to that ever attained by any of the saints throughout their lives, and this grace she never lost, but on the contrary continually augmented in her life. 6. Being a child of Adam, Mary was in need of redemption, not to free her from sin, but to preserve her against sin.

II. Reasons for this dogma. 1. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was not defined until December 8, 1854, by Pope Pius IX, but it had always been taught in the Church as a divinely revealed doctrine. 2. The Holy Scriptures, as interpreted by the Fathers of the Church, contain this doctrine: (a) "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, . . . she shall crush thy head" (Genesis iii. 15). (b) Types of the Immaculate Conception were the ark of Noah, Jacob's ladder, the burning bush, etc. (c) Many words of the prophets can be understood of Mary's sinless conception; e.g., what they say about the holy Jerusalem, the ark of sanctification, the house built by eternal Wisdom, etc. (d) The salutation which the Angel addressed to Mary on the day of the Annunciation implies this doctrine. 3. The Fathers speak of Mary as the supreme miracle, as nearest to God and above all praise; they declare her superior to Eve in the latter's innocence; they called her the lily among thorns, the virgin earth from which the new Adam came forth, etc., etc.; they hold that sin should not be thought of when there is question of Mary; they call her immaculate, more holy than sanctity, more pure than purity, etc. 4. The Popes have

promoted devotion to the Immaculate Conception and have inculcated the doctrine. The Council of Trent in its decree on sin excluded the Blessed Virgin. 5. This doctrine has been universally believed by all classes in the Church, although a few questioned it at different times. 6. The Immaculate Conception was altogether fitting since the Son of God was to take flesh from the Virgin Mary, and He could not permit that His Mother should ever have been subject to His enemy.

Lessons. 1. Rejoice over the Immaculate Conception, for Mary is truly the "honor of our people." 2. Ask Our Lady's intercession against temptation and sin. 3. Praise God for the great privilege granted to our Mother.

Sermons

The Immaculate Conception

BY THE REV. P. A BEECHER

Frequently throughout the year we kept both feast and holy day in Mary's honor. We rejoiced at her nativity; we honored her annunciation; we knelt with her in tenderness at the crib; we sorrowed as we met her on the road to Calvary; we joined in her joy on Easter Sunday; and of that joy we felt the consummation when, her checkered life of sorrow and happiness ended, we saw her taken gloriously body and soul into heaven. But on the forthcoming feast we shall be called upon to celebrate that privilege which is the beginning and root of all her sanctity; which constitutes her "the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel, the salvation of her people," and an honor to the whole human race. The feast of the Immaculate Conception! Happy should be the ears which hear that announcement, for, I say to you, generations longed to see the day that would commemorate its final decision, and they saw it not. Fathers, doctors, theologians, and the faithful of all times believed in the Immaculate Conception; nevertheless, it was not until the ever memorable December day, in the year of grace 1854, after the cannon in St. Angelo had boomed a signal for a triumphant peal of bells, that the doctrine

became an article of defined faith, so that thereafter no one could doubt it without hurting his own soul. The coming feast will be the forty-seventh anniversary of that day of triumph, and though our cities will wear their workaday aspect, we can, for all that, make it a day of honor for Mary and of profit to ourselves by congratulating her on her high privilege and begging her assistance.

But we may be called upon not only to congratulate her and beg her assistance, but likewise to defend her honor; for it is a well-known fact that none other of her titles is so strenuously denied by non-Catholics as that of her Immaculate Conception. This is in part due to ignorance regarding it, but principally because the sects at variance with Catholic teaching, no matter how much they may differ among themselves, are all, from the heresy of old Nestorius, who disgraced the patriarchal see of Constantinople, down to the last wind of strange doctrine, characterized by their attempt to belittle the dignity of the Mother of God. Need we say that their hostility and anger are spent in vain, for against her enemies she is as an army set in battle array! She needs no defence, for her Son will reckon with her adversaries. Still, in accordance with the promise, "They that will explain me shall find life and shall have salvation from the Lord," we shall offer a few reasons for our belief.

For the sake of clearness, we shall first state the doctrine in the words of the definition: "The Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first moment of her conception, by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Christ Jesus the Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin."

We now come to consider some of the arguments. Of course the great argument for us Catholics is that the Church has defined it; but apart from this we must be able to give an account of the faith that is in us. We shall divide the arguments into two classes, the first class including those which go to show how conformable the doctrine is to reason and revelation, the second the immediate arguments on which the definition has been founded.

As to the former: Firstly, Jesus Christ is the Son of God and of the Virgin Mary, proceeding from all eternity from the bosom of His eternal Father, born in the fulness of time of His Virgin

Mother, and united to her by every tie that can bind a mother and son. Now, as His Father is the infinitely holy God, adored of cherubim and seraphim, must we not hold that His Mother was at least preserved from all sin, for dishonor to a mother is dishonor to the son? Furthermore, let us consider the part Mary has taken in the Incarnation. Let us take any part of the Sacred Humanity, — the Sacred Heart, for instance. We adore it. Is it the Divinity which is united to it? Not merely that, but we adore the living, fleshy heart itself, just as it beats within the bosom of Jesus Christ. But where did He get that Heart? where His Flesh and Blood? From the most pure veins of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And are we to suppose that flesh and blood so honored, deified, united to the Divinity for evermore by the indissoluble bond of personal union, could come from a source stained by that stain which of all others God detests most, — the foul stain of sin? *Could* sin touch God so closely? No one who remembers that into His presence nothing defiled shall enter, and who has formed the first idea of His sanctity, can for one moment entertain the thought.

Secondly, the Prophet Jeremias and John the Baptist, although conceived in sin, were by special grace sanctified before birth, the former because he was to predict the coming of Christ, the latter because he was to prepare the way. And as God granted this grace to persons who were only remotely and externally connected with His Son, one of whom while in the flesh never saw Him, is it not natural to suppose that He would go the whole way and completely exempt from sin her who was to be the mother of that same Son, and who, we are told, was prepared for her Divine Maternity from all eternity? And the reasonableness of this argument is confirmed by the fact that the privilege of the Baptist was greater than that of the Prophet, inasmuch as he came nearer Christ.

Finally, God gives His grace to each one according to the end, dignity, and office for which one is intended. Now, Mary is the Mother of God and a co-operator in the redemption; and hence we almost invariably find reference to her when there is question of Christ and the redemption. When Isaiah had in seraphic fervor besought God to make clearer the mystery of the redemption,

he was shown the Virgin with her Son Emmanuel, and the Flower from the root of Jesse. Jeremias, equally favored, sang in the sublime simplicity of Hebrew prophecy of the wonder which God would create on earth: "A woman shall encompass a man." And coming to later times we find the same undivided reference. In St. Matthew we read, "the mother with Jesus who will make safe his people," and "the boy with Mary his mother"; in St. Luke, "blessed, with her blessed fruit," and the "mother with the infant who is a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of the people Israel"; in St. Paul, "the mother with the Son who is sent from heaven that we might receive the adoption of the sons of God"; and the favored evangelist, while rapt in ecstasy in lone Patmos, gazed with eagle eye on the wonderful secrets of heaven, and saw, great among them, "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon beneath her feet, and on her head a crown of stars, and she brought forth a man child who was to rule all nations with an iron rod." Thus, throughout, we find her mentioned in connection with Christ and the redemption, just as Eve is mentioned with Adam and the fall. What, then, is the conclusion? That she must have been always free from sin, because nothing could be more opposed to the redemption than sin; for the redemption means a rescuing from sin, a buying back, as it were, from the dominion of Satan.

The foregoing are a few of the many arguments — for we meet them on all sides — which go to show how conformable is the doctrine to reason and revelation. But we now come to a brief consideration of the arguments on which the definition was founded; namely, tradition, the belief of the faithful, and Sacred Scripture.

As to Tradition: Tradition has come from the Apostles; but they themselves were too busily engaged in preaching to transmit it in writing, and accordingly we must go to their disciples, the early Fathers and Christian writers, to find the full deposit of apostolic teaching. Nevertheless, we have it on testimony, which while not clearly established cannot be denied, that St. Andrew said, "As the first Adam was made of the earth before it was cursed, so the second Adam was formed of virgin earth which was never cursed." Passing from the age of the Apostles we

next come to that of the Fathers and Christian writers, those giants of the Church whose majestic foreheads flash on to us the light of heaven. No visionaries these, but men whose great minds were developed in the cold, severe philosophy of the pagan school. With one voice they have spoken, and that voice is that Mary is Immaculate. From the school of Alexandria, in its day the centre of the world's philosophy, come the voices of Dionysius and the renowned Origen. Cyprian voices the belief of famous old Carthage. In Milan we hear the eloquent voice of Ambrose. Constantinople hearkens to the golden-mouthed Chrysostom. To Jerome, in the caves of Palestine, "Mary is the cloud of day who never knew darkness." Augustine casts in the full weight of his mighty intellect; while Basil holds the high place of leader whom defenders of the doctrine have gloried to follow. Great and strong as the peal of thunder is the voice of the Fathers and Doctors which has come reverberating down the centuries, not like thunder in its dying between hills and valleys, but gaining strength with time and distance, until to-day that voice re-echoes from the walls of China to the llanos of Peru, from the Rocky Mountains to the distant wash of Australasian seas; for everywhere is the belief strong, vivid, cherished, that Mary is Immaculate; and as unceasingly as from the choir of angels goes up the anthem of "Holy, Lord God of Hosts," does the salutation "Hail, full of grace," ascend from the Catholic heart to Heaven's Immaculate Queen.

Nor are we Catholics of America second to others in our veneration of Mary, for, grand and glorious thought, noble reparation of Catholic instinct, and mayhap happy omen of our religious destiny, we offset the unbelief and prejudice of the still doubting millions by keeping the feast of the Immaculate Conception as our national festival.

Of the next argument, the belief of the faithful, it will be necessary to say a few words only. It has what we might call two phases, the historical and the theological. The former, or historical phase, we can treat of in one sentence; namely, history proves that the doctrine has been believed from the earliest times all over the world. From this arises the second or theological aspect, the Infallibility of the Church, which in the present case

is a two-edged sword of defence, having what we might call a passive and an active side. By the former, or passive Infallibility, we mean that the faithful as a body can never err in believing, and by the latter, that the Church can never err in teaching; for if either of these should come to pass, then and there the gates of hell would have prevailed, which, Christ testifying, can never be.

Finally comes the great question, Where in Sacred Scripture is it revealed? True, it is not formally stated in Sacred Scripture; for instance, the word "Immaculate" is not used. But those sacred writings are the great spiritual mine into which the deeper and more perseveringly we delve the greater shall be the treasure found. Now theologians are convinced that the words of the Archangel, "full of grace," were expressive not only of Mary's then sanctity, but were expressive of sanctity never sullied by stain of any kind. They are convinced that to Mary alone, in the fulness of their *mystic* sense, do the words of the Canticle of Canticles apply, where God gazes on her pure soul and, delighted with this His noblest work, says: "As the lily amongst the thorns, so is my beloved amongst the daughters of Jerusalem; my love, my dove, my beautiful one, thou art all fair and there is no spot in thee: my love is one only." And pursuing this *mystic* sense we ask, Why *one only?* Does He not love those who love Him? Did He not love John the Baptist, greater than who, He declared, was not born of woman? Did He not love Peter, when in the fulness of honest love the big-hearted Apostle exclaimed, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee"? And did He not love Mary Magdalen, when He testified that many sins were forgiven her, for she had loved much; when He addressed her by her name as she sat at His feet gazing with love into His countenance; and when, above all, on the first Easter Sunday morning, blinded with tears and distracted with grief, she mistook Him for the gardener, and in the simplicity of her ardent love asked if He had stolen her Lord, and where He had put Him? Yes, these He loved, and loved intensely; but for Mary alone has He the words, "My love is one only"—because she is *all* fair, and there is *no* spot in her; because she is the Immaculate Conception.

But though great be the mystic testimony of the writer of the Canticles, and the literal testimony of the Evangelist who penned the sublime words of the *Magnificat*, God was not satisfied, but He Himself would bespeak Mary's praises. Nor did He wait the fulness of time for the great mystery of the Incarnation. We must go back in spirit over five thousand years to the Garden of Eden, the scene of His first dealing with man. The woman, foolishly believing the serpent, takes the fruit and eats and gives to her husband, who also eats. Instantly, the Triune God comes in anger from heaven, upbraids the two miserable beings now trembling before Him, and — what a subject for fear and reflection — mocks them: "Lo! Adam has become as one of us." My brethren, we but little realize how much for us depended on this awful moment. An insult has been offered to Him who for a single offence drove hosts of spirits from heaven, pursued them with thunder and winged lightning through the realms of chaos, until He prostrated them on the burning marl of the deep tract of hell. He is still the same God, without diminution of majesty, without shadow of change. A grievous offence has been committed against Him — how will He act? Verily, my brethren, it was an awful and tremendous moment; the destiny of mankind was trembling in the balance, and the brightest cherub, if asked his opinion, would have declared that it was woe to the human race. But God, in His infinite design, foresaw what no cherub could see: He foresaw the glory of the Incarnation, and the pure soul of Mary, and accordingly mercy seasoned justice, or, in figurative Hebrew thought, mercy kissed justice. Still justice, being the sternest of the virtues, demands some reparation. No sooner had God upbraided Adam and Eve than He cursed the earth, cast them out amid its briers and thorns, and regretting that He ever made man, went back to His faithful angels. This was indeed a humiliating scene for the whole human race. But there is one redeeming event, one which the whole human race should gladly adhere to, but of which, unfortunately, millions are loath to hear. In anger, indeed, He went back to His faithful angels, but of what He did before so doing I have not yet told you all. He turned to the serpent, cursed it, and said: "Because thou hast done this, I will place enmities between thee and the woman, and

thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." Hearken to the glorious prophecy of the Immaculate Conception, rightly called the first gospel, because the first glad tidings to come from an angry God!

But let this suffice. It is sad that we cannot speak of Mary without being under the necessity of introducing the unquiet tone of controversial voice, and of going thus far to prove what we ourselves have already so lovingly believed. For how, O sweet Mother, as we see you rise from seas of sanctity, "our tainted nature's solitary boast," could we picture you otherwise than with soul Immaculate, purer than foam on central ocean, more beautiful than the morning star which is your emblem — a beauty not of earth but of heaven, and infusing into those who contemplate it love and peace and joy and holy purity. Mary Immaculate! Yes, our Catholic instinct was ahead of reason in telling us so, and we would have believed had there never been sounded from the city on the hills the trumpet note of an infallible decision. Let us congratulate our Queen on her high privilege, which we know to be the beginning of that union with her Son which has constituted her the realization of every type of female grace and loveliness of the Old Dispensation: of the beauty of Sarah and Rachel; the prudence of Abigail; the chastity of Susanna; the fortitude of the mother of the Machabees, and the heroic virtue of the lily-crowned maiden of the valley of the Bethulia. But human types are altogether inadequate. We look to heaven, and even there we see her above the choirs of angels and archangels, principalities, powers, virtues, dominations, and thrones, nay, above the young-eyed cherubim and rapt seraphim, next the throne of God Himself. These are Mary's servants, she their Queen; and while contemplating her beauty they gladly own her such. To them, Queen she remains; to us, a something dearer, a something more, for by the closest spiritual ties, whose binding was that of God Himself, she is — our Mother. Nor will she forget the occasion, for it was the closing scene in the deep tragedy of the sacred Passion, when our Divine Lord, in a supreme effort of final love, for the moment conquering agony, turned to the beloved Disciple and said: "Son, behold thy mother." Though unborn, we who to-day address her then existed in the mind of God, and we too

were consecrated her children in the person of the beloved Disciple. And may God be praised for giving us so tender and dear a Mother, and for infusing into our hearts the love of children; for such, O sweet Mary, we feel; else whence this unselfish joy at the thought that you are Immaculate, or the confidence with which, when oft the dazzling rays of the Great White Throne would awe us back into our own wretchedness, we still look up and cry for pardon, because we know, we feel, that you are there? With the sweet ways of a mother, lead us, lead us on to Jesus, and from your place beside the throne deign to intercede for us, for we well know that with the sceptre of intercessory prayer you rule that sacred realm of all mercy and all love, the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The Immaculate Conception

BY CARDINAL CORSI

Acting upon the inspiration which the Holy Ghost is daily imparting to her, the Church has instituted feasts in commemoration of the chief mysteries in the Blessed Virgin's life. She celebrates in an especial manner the Immaculate Conception, the holy birth, the divine Motherhood, the sufferings, and the glorious death and assumption into heaven of the sweet Mother of Christ.

To-day the Church is celebrating the feast of her Immaculate Conception, and I wish to point out to you wherein the exalted privilege consists by which Mary was thus distinguished, and how she corresponded with this extraordinary grace with which God adorned her. Alone among all mankind Mary, by a special grace, was conceived without the stain of original sin, because it was befitting the dignity of Jesus Christ that His human mother should never be sullied by sin; never, not even for a moment, subjected to the dominion of Satan. This the Church has solemnly declared and prescribed for our belief.

It is truly a glorious privilege which was bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin at her conception. In order to form a proper idea of it, let us contemplate the unhappy state in which we all were born. Upon us rests the penalty of the fatal fall of our first

parents. At our conception we were burdened with the stain of original sin and with its awful penalty. We all were born sinners, children of wrath, slaves of the devil.

Mary, alone of all mankind, has been exempt from this misfortune from the moment of her conception. Among mankind the Lord has at various times selected specially favored friends, but notwithstanding His love for them, notwithstanding His manifestations of grace bestowed upon these privileged souls, not one of them was ever freed from this baneful inheritance. It was their fate, as it was the fate of all children of Adam, to suffer the penalty.

How different was Mary's happy lot! Although a child of Adam, like the rest of us, although the offspring of a father fallen into sin, she did not inherit the penalty ordained for the rest of mankind. What an honor, indeed, is this prerogative of grace! Had God been pleased to sanctify her just before her birth, she would have shared this great grace with John the Baptist. Had God satisfied Himself with pouring out upon her His graces, she would have shared such honor with the apostles and other saints. But God wished to make a marked difference even between the elect souls and His Mother, even between the saints and their queen, by exempting her from original sin, a privilege which no one ever shared with her.

And what were the results of this distinct sanctification of Mary? The first result was this: that she never experienced an inclination to evil, she never experienced this direful consequence of original sin. From the first moment she was, in body and soul, completely subject to the spirit of God. From that very moment she could exclaim, "All generations shall call me blessed, for He that is mighty hath done great things in me."

The second blessed result of the special sanctification of the Immaculate Virgin was, that she ever remained zealous in preserving and increasing the grace which she had received. Although exempt from human infirmities and confirmed in God's grace from her conception, still she incessantly strove to be most faithful in the fulfilment of all her duties, and spent much time in prayer. Although absolutely free from sin, she accepted adversity and suffering with humility and patience. She had her

full share in the sufferings of her divine Son and in the great sorrows of Golgotha. In such manner she daily even increased the grace with which she had been endowed from the very moment of her conception.

Let us rejoice, dear brethren, in this glorious Immaculate Conception. Let us thank the Lord that He has distinguished the blessed Virgin by so great and extraordinary a privilege; and let us in confidence seek our refuge in the purest of Virgins, so that she may obtain for us, through her powerful intercession, purity of body and soul, and victory over all temptations. Let us address to her in the hours of temptation that brief prayer: "Through thy most holy Immaculate Conception, O Mary, preserve my body and soul from all impurity." Let us often during the day salute the blessed Virgin with the short ejaculation: "Hail Mary, conceived without sin," and we may be sure that she, who is not only the Virgin of Immaculate Conception but also the Mother of God, will graciously hear our prayers and that she will intercede for us with her divine Son; and a more powerful mediator we could not desire. Amen.

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SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

SUBJECT

OUR LORD, THE EXPECTED REDEEMER AND MESSIAH

TEXT

Art thou he that art to come? — MATT. xi. 3.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. John the Baptist was the "angel" or messenger sent to prepare the way for the Messiah. He had previously (John i. 19 ff.; iii. 25 ff.) borne public testimony to the Divinity and Messiahship of Jesus, and our Lord for the sake of John's disciples now confirms that testimony by an appeal to His own miracles.

I. Expectation of the Redeemer and Messiah. 1. The fall of Adam and the promise of a Saviour. 2. Promises renewed to Abraham and the Patriarchs. 3. Birth of the Saviour and the circumstances of His life portrayed in type and prophecy. 4. All these prophecies were fulfilled in our Lord. (See to-day's Epistle.)

II. Our Lord's mission as Redeemer expressed in His name Jesus. 1. This name signifies Saviour, and was given to our Lord by divine command (Luke i. 31; Matt. i. 20, 21). 2. Suitableness of this name for our Lord. It was given to Josue in the Old Testament, who had delivered the chosen people from their enemies and led them into the promised land. How much more appropriate it was in the case of our Lord, who freed the world from sin and opened to all the gates of heaven!

III. Our Lord's mission as Messiah expressed in the meaning of the name Christ. 1. Christ signifies the *anointed*, and was given in the Old Testament to kings, priests, and prophets,

and was expressive of their offices. Our Lord was anointed by His Divinity and plenitude of grace (Acts x. 38). 2. Christ was the Great Prophet, as the supreme Revealer and Teacher of God's will to man. 3. He is our High-priest who reconciles us to God, offering Himself for us on Calvary and in the Mass (Heb. vi. 20). 4. He is our spiritual King, governing and protecting His Church (Luke i. 32; Apoc. xix. 16).

Lessons. 1. Gratitude to Christ our Saviour, King, Priest, and Prophet. 2. Preparation for the feast of Christmas by imitating the penance and austerity of John the Baptist, and his love and loyalty to Christ.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article II of the Creed

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

THE GREAT BLESSINGS WHICH FLOW FROM THE BELIEF AND PROFESSION OF THIS ARTICLE

That wonderful and superabundant are the blessings which flow to the human race from the belief and profession of this article we learn from these words of St. John: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the son of God, God abideth in him and he in God;"[1] and also from the words of Christ our Lord, proclaiming the Prince of the Apostles blessed for the confession of this truth: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven."[2] This sublime truth is the most firm basis of our salvation and redemption.

HOW WE MAY LEARN TO ESTIMATE THEIR VALUE

But as the fruit of these admirable blessings is best known by considering the ruin brought on man by his fall from that most happy state in which God had placed our first parents, let the pastor be particularly careful to make known to the faithful the

[1] 1 John iv. 15. [2] Matt. xvi. 17.

cause of this common misery and universal calamity. When Adam had departed from the obedience due to God and had violated the prohibition, "Of every tree of Paradise thou shalt eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat, for in what day soever thou shalt eat it, thou shalt die the death," [1] he fell into the extreme misery of losing the sanctity and righteousness in which he was created; and of becoming subject to all those other evils which are detailed more at large by the holy Council of Trent.[2] The pastor, therefore, will not omit to remind the faithful that the guilt and punishment of original sin were not confined to Adam, but justly descended from him, as from their source and cause, to all posterity. The human race, having fallen from its elevated dignity, no power of men or angels could raise it from its fallen condition and replace it in its primitive state. To remedy the evil and repair the loss it became necessary that the Son of God, whose merits are infinite, clothed in the weakness of our flesh, should remove the infinite weight of sin and reconcile us to God in his blood.

BELIEF AND PROFESSION OF THIS ARTICLE NECESSARY TO SALVATION

The belief and profession of this our redemption, as God declared from the beginning, are now, and always have been, necessary to salvation. In the sentence of condemnation pronounced against the human race immediately after the sin of Adam the hope of redemption was held out in these words, which announced to the devil the loss he was to sustain by man's redemption: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." [3]

THE PROMISE OF A SAVIOUR

The same promise God again often confirmed, and more distinctly manifested to those chiefly whom He desired to make special objects of His predilection: among others to the patriarch Abraham, to whom He often declared this mystery, but then more

[1] Gen. ii. 16, 17. [2] Sess. 5, Can. 1 and 2; Sess. 6, Can. 1 and 2.
[3] Gen. iii. 15.

explicitly when, in obedience to His command, Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac: "Because," says He, "thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake; I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the sea shore. Thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice." [1] From these words it was easy to infer that He who was to deliver mankind from the ruthless tyranny of Satan was to be descended from Abraham; and that while He was the Son of God, He was to be born of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh.

Not long after, to preserve the memory of this promise, God renewed the same covenant with Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. When in a vision Jacob saw a ladder standing on earth, and its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending by it,[2] he also heard the Lord saying to him, as the Scripture testifies: "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land, wherein thou sleepest, I will give to thee and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth: thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." [3]

Nor did God cease afterwards to excite in the posterity of Abraham, and in many others, the hope of a Saviour by renewing the recollection of the same promise; for after the establishment of the Jewish republic and religion it became better known to His people. Many types signified and prophets foretold the numerous and invaluable blessings which our Redeemer, Christ Jesus, was to bring to mankind. And indeed the prophets, whose minds were illuminated with light from above, foretold the birth of the Son of God, the wondrous works which He wrought while on earth, His doctrine, manners, kindred, death, resurrection, and the other mysterious circumstances regarding Him,[4] — and all these as graphically as if they were passing before their eyes. With the exception of future and past time only, we can dis-

[1] Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18. [2] Gen. xxviii. 12. [3] Gen. xxviii. 13, 14.
[4] Is. vii. 14; viii. 3; ix. 5; xi. 1–53; Jer. xxiii. 6; xxx. 9; Dan. vii. 13; ix. 24.

cover no difference between the predictions of the Prophets and the preaching of the Apostles, between the faith of the ancient patriarchs and that of Christians.

But we are now to speak of the several parts of this Article.

MEANING OF THE NAME JESUS, BY WHOM AND WHY GIVEN

Jesus. This is the proper name of the man-God, and signifies Saviour; a name given Him not accidentally, or by the judgment or will of man, but by the counsel and command of God. For the angel announced to Mary His mother: "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus."[1] He afterwards not only commanded Joseph, who was espoused to the Virgin, to call the child by that name, but also declared the reason why He should be so called. "Joseph," says he, "son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins."[2] In the Sacred Scriptures we meet with many who were called by this name — the son of Nave, for instance, who succeeded Moses, and, by special privilege denied to Moses, conducted into the land of promise the people whom Moses had delivered from Egypt;[3] and Josedec, whose father was a priest.[4] But how much more appropriately shall we not deem this name given to Him who gave light and liberty and salvation, not to one people only, but to all men, of all ages — to men oppressed, not by famine, or Egyptian or Babylonian bondage, but sitting in the shadow of death and fettered by sin, and riveted in the galling chains of the devil — to Him who purchased for them a right to the inheritance of heaven, and reconciled them to God the Father. In those men who were designated by the same name we recognize so many types of Christ our Lord, by whom these blessings were poured out on the human race. All other names, which according to prophecy were to be given by divine appointment to the Son of God, are to be referred to this one name Jesus,[5] for while they partially glanced at the salvation which He was to purchase

[1] Luke i. 31. [2] Matt. i. 20, 21. [3] Eccl. xlvi. 1.
[4] Agg. i. 1. [5] Is. vii. 14; viii. 8; ix. 6; Jer. xxiii. 6.

for us, this fully embraced the universal salvation of the human race.

THE NAME CHRIST, WHY ADDED TO THAT OF JESUS

Christ. To the name "Jesus" is added that of "Christ," which signifies the "anointed." This name is expressive of honor and office, and is not peculiar to one thing only, but common to many; for in the Old Law priests and kings, whom God, on account of the dignity of their office, commanded to be anointed, were called Christ,[1] — priests, because they commend the people to God by unceasing prayer, offer sacrifice to Him, and deprecate His wrath; kings, because they are entrusted with the government of the people, and to them principally belong the authority of the law, the protection of innocence, and the punishment of guilt. As, therefore, both seem to represent the majesty of God on earth, those who were appointed to the royal or sacerdotal office were anointed with oil.[2] Prophets, who as the interpreters and ambassadors of the immortal God unfolded to us the secrets of heaven, and by salutary precepts and the prediction of future events exhorted to amendment of life, were also usually anointed.

When Jesus Christ our Saviour came into the world, He assumed these three characters of Prophet, Priest, and King, and is therefore called "Christ," having been anointed for the discharge of these functions, not by mortal hand or with earthly ointment, but by the power of His heavenly Father and with a spiritual oil; for the plenitude of the Holy Spirit and a more copious effusion of all gifts than any created being is capable of receiving were poured into His soul. This the prophet clearly indicates when he addresses the Redeemer in these words: "Thou hast loved justice, and hated iniquity: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."[3] The same is also more explicitly declared by the prophet Isaias: "The spirit of the Lord," says he, "is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me: he hath sent me to preach to the meek."[4]

[1] 1 Kings xii. 3; xvi. 6; xxiv. 7. [2] Lev. viii. 30; 3 Kings xix. 15, 16.
[3] Ps. xliv. 8. [4] Is. lxi. 1.

Jesus Christ, therefore, was the great prophet and teacher,[1] from whom we have learned the will of God and by whom the world has been taught the knowledge of the Father; and the name of Prophet belongs to him pre-eminently, because all others who were dignified with that name were his disciples, sent principally to announce the coming of that Prophet who was to save all men.

Christ was also a Priest, not indeed of the tribe of Levi, as were the priests of the Old Law, but of that of which the prophet David sang: "Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech."[2] This subject the Apostle fully and accurately develops in his epistle to the Hebrews.[3]

Christ not only as God, but as man, we also acknowledge to be a King. Of him the angel testifies: "He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."[4] This kingdom of Christ is spiritual and eternal, begun on earth but perfected in heaven: and indeed He discharges by His admirable providence the duties of King towards His Church, governing and protecting her against the open violence and covert designs of her enemies, imparting to her not only holiness and righteousness, but also power and strength to persevere. But although the good and the bad are contained within the limits of this kingdom, and thus all by right belong to it, yet those who in conformity with His commands lead unsullied and innocent lives, experience beyond all others the sovereign goodness and beneficence of our King. Although descended from the most illustrious race of kings, He obtained this kingdom not by hereditary or other human right, but because God bestowed on Him as man all the power, dignity, and majesty of which human nature is susceptible. To Him, therefore, God delivered the government of the whole world, and to this His sovereignty, which has already commenced, all things shall be made fully and entirely subject on the day of judgment.[5]

[1] Deut. xviii. 15. [2] Ps. cix. 4; Heb. v. 5. [3] Heb. v. vii.
[4] Luke i. 33. [5] 1 Cor. xv. 25–27.

Sermons

Christ, the True Messiah

BY THE REV. BERTRAND L. CONWAY, C.S.P.

It has often been stated, beloved brethren, by the rationalistic critics and broad churchmen of to-day who deny the divinity of Christ, that never once during His public ministry did our Saviour declare Himself to be the true Messiah. Theory after theory has been devised to uphold this contention. Some have denied the historical character of the Messianic utterances of the Gospels; others have appealed confidently to the supposed denials of our Saviour; others have insisted on the stupidity of the Apostles who failed to understand their Master's message; others have imagined a Messianic legend framed by the first enthusiastic preachers of the resurrection. It is not our purpose, beloved brethren, to discuss these views of the modern unbeliever. But in view of the fact that these theories are being voiced to-day in the popular magazines and newspapers, it is good for us to consider briefly the true witness of the Gospels to Jesus, the Messiah.

Nothing is clearer in the Gospels than the fact that the Jews in the time of Our Lord were ardently longing for the coming of the King of Israel, the Messiah. Most of the people had lost sight of Isaias, Man of Sorrows, who was to govern a universal spiritual kingdom. They rather looked forward to a powerful king, who with and under Jehovah would reign supreme over all the kings and nations of the earth. He was to appear before the people with the evident stamp of God's approval to inaugurate a new, eternal kingdom, "high above the kings of the earth" (Ps. lxxxviii. 28). He was to crush all the enemies of Israel, free them from the galling yoke of the Romans, and make the Jewish people the Lords of all the world. "In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed: all nations shall magnify him" (Ps. lxxi. 17). Every one of Israel's prophets had pointed to Him; every one of Israel's righteous kings had foreshadowed Him; every one of Israel's priests had offered sacrifices for His coming. He was to be their great Prophet, Priest, and King.

The Christian Messiah, as witnessed to in the Gospels, was in very truth a Prophet, Priest, and King. He came indeed to found

a new eternal kingdom, but a spiritual, not a political one. "My kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36). Even the apostles found this a hard lesson to learn, for on the very morning of the Ascension they asked the risen Jesus: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?" (Acts i. 6).

He was to be a triumphant king indeed, but His triumph was to be gained by the apparent failure of the Cross. He had told His followers frequently that He was the suffering Messiah, but the words of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus prove to us how hard this was to believe (Luke xxiv. 21).

There is no doubt whatever that John the Baptist taught the people in the country about the Jordan that Jesus was the Messiah. Attracted by John's marvellous preaching, and won by his austere life, they at first thought him the expected Christ. But he instantly denied it, declaring that he was only the forerunner of the Messianic kingdom which was at hand (Luke iii. 1, 15; Matt. iii. 2). He told them plainly that Jesus, the founder of that kingdom, is one "mightier than I, the lachet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (Mark i. 7, 8; Matt. iii. 11).

These words of the Baptist prepare us for the miracles wrought at the baptism of Jesus, whose Messianic bearing is most evident. In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus Himself tells us that the Holy Spirit anointed Him at His symbolic baptism, and publicly consecrated Him to the divine office of the Messiah. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, wherefore he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart" (Luke iv. 18). Jehovah, His heavenly Father, declared from on high that He was the Messiah: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17). St. Matthew makes this very clear to us when he applies to Jesus the words of Isaias, who proclaimed our Saviour well pleasing to His Father because of His Messianic office: "Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul hath been well pleased. I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles" (Matt. xii. 18). St. Peter later on declares to the centurion Cornelius the Messianic character of

Christ's baptism: "You know . . . Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed . . . for God was with him" (Acts x. 37, 38).

From the banks of the Jordan "Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil" (Matt. iv. 1). The threefold temptation of Christ is clearly a revelation of His Messiahship. Satan, through the keenness of his intellect, evidently suspects that Jesus is the promised Messiah, for he greets Him with the title of "Son of God" (Matt. iv. 3). Satan well knew that the Messiah was to possess a great power of working miracles, so he demands of Christ "that these stones be made bread," and that He cast himself down from "the pinnacle of the temple." He further knew that the Messiah was to be the king of all the nations, so he proposes to Him this universal royalty to see whether or not our Saviour would declare that He already possessed it (Matt. iv. 3, 6, 9). Jesus rebukes Satan without, however, in the slightest degree waiving his claim to the title of Messiah, or Son of God.

From the very outset of His public ministry Jesus proclaimed Himself by word and work to be the true Messiah. It is, of course, certain that this manifestation of Himself became clearer and more direct as His ministry neared its close, but there were good reasons for this.

His work in Galilee would have been seriously impeded if He had allowed the people to regard Him as their Messiah, according to the current view of the day. We all remember the popular excitement at the sight of the miracle of the loaves and fishes. The people associated the Messiah with the fulfilment of all the national hopes, and cried out: "This is of a truth the prophet, that is to come into the world." They at once desired "to take him by force and make him king," in face of the Roman power (John vi. 14, 15).

It was to guard against this popular enthusiasm, and not to gainsay in any way His belief in His own Messiahship that our Saviour forbade the open recognition of it by those whom He cured of demon possession. The demons knew Him as "the Christ," "the Holy One of God," "the Son of God," the "Son

of the most high God," come to torment and destroy them (Luke iv. 41; Matt. viii. 29; Mark i. 24, 25, 34; Mark iii. 12; v. 7).

Our Saviour acted in the same way with regard to many of the miracles He wrought. When He healed the leper He said to him, "See thou tell no one" (Mark i. 44); and in raising the daughter of Jairus, "he charged them strictly that no man should know it" (Mark v. 43; compare Matt. ix. 30; Mark vii. 36; viii. 26). This by no means implied any denial on His part of the miracles He wrought. But He knew full well the evil dispositions of many of His enemies. Had not Corozain, Bethsaida, Capharnaum, and even Nazareth, refused to hearken to His preaching, and attributed His miracles to Beelzebub?

Where the influence of the Pharisees was practically powerless, as at Gerasa in the Decapolis, on the eastern bank of the Lake of Genesareth, He told the man He had cured to tell his friends the great things the Lord had done for him (Mark v. 19). So in Samaria, where the same conditions prevailed, our Saviour found no difficulty in proclaiming His Messiahship to the sinful woman of Sichar (John iv. 26).

Instead, therefore, of declaring directly and explicitly that He was the Messiah, our Saviour at first preferred to manifest Himself indirectly by His words and miracles, thus gradually destroying in the minds of the people their false view of a political Messiah, and preparing His chosen ones for the spiritual Messiah, who as Son of God and Son of man was to die on the Cross for man's salvation.

The "gospel, or good news, of the kingdom," was the subject of His discourses in the cities and synagogues of Galilee (Matt. iv. 23; ix. 35; Luke vii. 1; ix. 11), and the theme of the beautiful Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vi. 33), and the parables at the lakeside (Mark iv. 11, 26, 30). As the Lord of the kingdom, he chooses its preachers, and invests them with His own divine authority, (Matt. x. 7; Mark iii. 14; Luke x. 9). Unlike the scribes and Pharisees, He teaches as one having authority (Matt. v. 22, 44; vii. 29), correcting their false human traditions, giving a new authoritative interpretation to the law of Sinai, and so perfecting it that the people "were astonished at

his doctrine" (Mark i. 22). What made them marvel the more, and made them believe that Jesus was the Messiah of their people, was the fact that He was looked upon as a carpenter's son from the despised Nazareth of Galilee, and a teacher who had never studied (Mark vi. 2, 3; John i. 46; vii. 52, 15).

Again the miracles our Saviour wrought prepared the people for His final explicit revelation of His Messiahship. He commanded the winds and the waves (Mark iv. 35–50), He healed the sick (Mark i. 31), He drove demons from the possessed (Mark i. 23), He cleansed the lepers (Mark i. 42), He raised the dead (Mark v. 42). No wonder the people cried out: "What is this new doctrine? for with power He commandeth the unclean spirits" (Mark i. 27). "Who is this that both wind and sea obey him?" (iv. 40). Surely "a great prophet is risen up among us" (Luke vii. 16).

Moreover, this humble Jesus, the friend of the lowly and sinners, tells the people continually that He is greater than any of their prophets — greater than Jonas, Solomon, or the Baptist (Matt. xii. 41, 42; xi. 9). He claims the prerogatives of Jehovah. He acts as master of the Sabbath, healing the paralytic and allowing His disciples to pluck the ears of corn on that day (Mark iii. 1–6; ii. 23). And when the Pharisees object, He declares Himself "greater than the temple," and Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. xii. 5–8). He pardons the paralytic his sins, and when His authority is gainsaid by His enemies, He works a miracle to prove it (Mark ii. 1–12). At the house of Simon, He receives back the penitent Magdalene, to the disgust of the strait-laced, hypocritical upholders of the law (Luke vii. 36–50). He gives His disciples the power to work miracles, which they exercise in His name (Mark iii. 15).

But not only did our Saviour insinuate His Messiahship by His authoritative teaching, His miracles, and His claim to divine powers, but He more than once asserted it Himself, or allowed His friends to do so.

When, for instance, the disciples of John asked Jesus whether He was the Messiah (Matt. xi. 3), He answered them by quoting the words which the prophet Isaias had used long before to indicate the Christ (Is. xxxv. 5; lxi. 1). "Go," He said to them,

"and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. xi. 4–5).

Again in praising John to the people after the disciples had departed, He praises him solely on account of his being the precursor of Himself, the true Messiah (Matt. xi. 10).

The first words of Andrew to his brother Simon to win him to Our Lord were: "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (John i. 41). And Philip says to his friend Nathaniel: "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write" (John i. 45). Later on Nathaniel talking to Jesus acknowledges His claim: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel" (John i. 49).

Still more explicit is the testimony of Peter near the town of Caesarea Philippi. Our Saviour had asked the apostles a direct question: "But whom do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi. 15, 16). It was a time most fitting such a clear, explicit acknowledgment of Christ's divinity and Messiahship. The ministry in Galilee was drawing to a close; they were about to journey to Jerusalem, where Jesus was fully aware that the Cross awaited Him.

This testimony is made all the more striking inasmuch as Jesus declares it proceeds from a divine revelation: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 17).

It moreover is confirmed by the witness of His heavenly Father at the transfiguration. As at the Jordan baptism, a voice came out of the cloud saying: "This is my most beloved Son, hear ye him." Moses and Elias appeared as representatives of the law and the prophets, giving their homage to Jesus as the founder of the New Covenant, the fulfilment of the Old. The glory of Jesus, "whose garments became shining and exceeding white as snow" (Mark ix. 1–7), gave the three apostles a foretaste of the glory of the triumphant Messiah.

During this last year, our Saviour frequently insists on this future triumph. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory

of his Father with his angels" (Matt. xvi. 27). "And when the Son of man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before him" (Matt. xxv. 31–32).

And yet continually He tries to impress upon their minds that He is the Man of Sorrows foretold by Isaias, who is come "to give his life a redemption for many" (Mark x. 45), who is to suffer and to be 'rejected by this generation" (Luke xvii. 25).

On His entry into Jerusalem the people made a great public demonstration in acknowledgment of Jesus the Messiah, to the great anger of the Pharisees. They cut down boughs from the trees, strewed their garments in the way, and shouted: "Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh," "Blessed be the king who cometh in the name of the Lord" (Mark xi. 8–10; Luke xix. 38). Jesus accepted this homage without a word of disapproval. The Pharisees came to Him and impudently demanded that He rebuke His disciples for their Messianic feelings. But instead of doing so, Our Lord said to them: "I say to you, that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out" (Luke xix. 40).

The last testimony of our Saviour to His Messiahship was made before the high-priest, and sealed the sentence of death upon Him. "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed God?" He was asked. And Jesus said to him: "I am. And you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark xiv. 61, 62).

We have thus in brief outline, beloved brethren, sketched the Gospel witness to the Messiahship of Jesus the Son of God. It is important for us to know it well, in view of the modern denial of the unbeliever, and the Jew. It may be hard to convince the rationalistic critic, but at the very least we should know the testimony of Jesus and His friends. I have met on my missions to non-Catholics, men and women of orthodox Judaism, who, alert to know the truth, have been won by a prayerful study of these texts to accept Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah of their people. Some have faced persecution as bitter as their fore-

fathers faced, when they became the first followers of the risen Christ. Let our prayers go forth for them all, that they kneel down one day with the doubting Thomas, crying out, "My Lord, my God."

Christ is He Who Should Come

BY THE REV. K. KROGH-TONNING

It was St. John the Baptist who called our Lord "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and who said of himself: "I am not worthy to loose the latchet of his shoe." "He must increase, but I must decrease." He described his own relation to Christ in words burning with love: "The friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled."

Such words express most lively faith in Christ; and what was Our Lord's testimony regarding His faithful and humble forerunner? He said: "Amen I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. xi. 11).

Can we believe that in spite of all this St. John ever really felt doubts about Christ? Those who think it inconceivable assume that he sent his disciples to our Lord for their sake, that they might see and hear Him, not for his own sake, since his faith required no strengthening. Ought we to assume that St. John had really lost his faith in Christ, and sent messengers to Him for his own peace of mind? If this had been so, he surely would not have applied to our Lord for information, but would have asked some one else's opinion. Jesus evidently took pains to prevent St. John from being suspected of a change of view, for He said that he was not a reed shaken by the wind (Matt. xi. 7).

I. *Miracles.* We often hear that faith in Christ and Christianity is opposed to all reason, and so men cannot be required to believe. But, on the other hand, if faith has nothing to do with reason, or rather is opposed to it, what can make us believe? We cannot believe unless we have some motive; we cannot fling ourselves blindly into some unknown abyss. Moreover, why should Christ have tried to support and strengthen St. John's faith by

adducing arguments that would appeal to his reason? For this is what He did, when He referred to His miracles.

To the deaf He said, "Ephpheta," and their hearing was restored. To the lepers, "I will, be thou made clean," and their disease disappeared. To the dead, "Arise," and they stood up and came forth from the grave. But there is a still greater miracle, which He wrought when by His own power He raised Himself from the dead and resumed His life. Mary Magdalene, the Apostles, and more than five hundred witnesses bore testimony to the fact of His resurrection. Now, who but God has control over life and death? Christ's resurrection differed from the raising of Lazarus and of Jairus's daughter; they were raised, and received afresh the gift of life, but our Lord overcame the might of death and rose, as He Himself said: "I have power to lay it [His life] down; and I have power to take it up again" (John x. 18). Hence He must be the Son of God, for God alone has power over life and death.

In His name miracles have been wrought in every age by His Saints, and there is an abundance of most trustworthy evidence in support of them. They continue even at the present day, but the greatest and most undeniable of all miracles is the existence of Christ's Church. She is a society like no other; she combats the evil desires and passions of mankind, and resists their pride and selfishness, and yet she has spread over the entire world and has everywhere triumphed.

Are we not justified in believing Christ's words when we know that miracles are wrought by Him and by His friends in His name? Is it unreasonable to assume that His Church is the kingdom of God, when in this kingdom, as in no other society on earth, all the forces of the world to come are seen to reside? I think that those who consider our faith in Jesus Christ and His Church to be foolish and unreasonable have never really examined either one or the other.

II. *Prophecies.* Our Lord referred to the prophecies regarding His person, as well as to His own miracles, and showed that in Himself the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled, since it had been foretold that the Messias should work miracles. Historians speak of ancient, medieval, and modern history, but to

those who have a clear insight into events there are only two periods; viz., the time before and the time since our Lord's life on earth. All that went before was in anticipation of His coming; all that has followed refers to Him, and is inexplicable without Him. All our science, art, and civilization dates from the renewal of the world that He effected. But the prophecies looked forward to Him; and His life history, both in outline and in detail, is recorded in the books of the Old Testament, from the first allusion to Him as the Seed of the woman, to the account of His forerunner. All this was written hundreds of years before His birth — if He is *not* the Son of God, who is He? If it is unreasonable to believe in Him, in whom may we reasonably put our faith?

III. *The Gospel.* Christ wishes not merely to silence doubters, but to win their hearts, and He does this by causing His gospel to be preached to the poor. Who are the poor? Surely all who are in want of anything. And what is meant by preaching the gospel? It means bringing glad tidings to the sorrowful and sinful, but it means more than this; for through the gospel of Christ the sick are healed, the hungry are fed, and the poor are enriched.

A countless host, that no man can number, composed of people of every age and nation, proclaims to us the impossibility of doubting that Christ was He who should come; He came to every one of them, and His coming rendered them happy, whereas before they were miserable sinners. Whither should we turn when we are beset with doubts and difficulties? We should follow St. John's example, and have recourse to our Lord Himself. Where shall we find Him? In His Church, and nowhere else. Elsewhere we shall seek Him in vain; but He promised to remain with His Church until the consummation of the world, so we may be sure of finding Him there. You will find Him in the Gospel, that is always being preached to the poor; you will find Him in the forgiveness of sins, that is always being bestowed upon the penitent; you will find Him in the living Bread that came down from Heaven to give life to the world. Come not in the spirit of pride, which thinks that it has a right to judge and criticize Christ's Church; those that come in such a spirit, come in vain.

But if you approach as humble children of the Church, full of confidence in her teaching, light will again shine in your souls and peace will reign in your hearts.

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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

SUBJECT

CHRIST THE SON OF GOD

TEXT

There hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not. The same is he that shall come after me, who is preferred before me, etc. — John i. 26, 27.

Analysis

Introduction. In last Sunday's Gospel we read that our Lord bore witness to the exalted dignity of St. John the Baptist, declaring that he was "more than a prophet." In to-day's Gospel St. John in turn gives testimony to the far higher dignity of our Lord, the latchet of whose shoes, he affirms, he is not worthy to loose. Christ was not only a great prophet like John, He was also the Word Incarnate, the true light that shone in darkness, but was not comprehended by the darkness (John i. 5–8); He was the Eternal (John i. 15), the true Son of God (John i. 34).

As the majority of the Jews failed to recognize the Divinity of Christ to whom St. John bore testimony, so do many to-day fail to acknowledge that same divine Saviour witnessed to by His Church.

I. Christ is true God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Divinity of Christ is much denied in our day. This dogma, however, is proved: 1. By prophecies, which foretold that our Lord would be "Emmanuel," i.e., God with us (Is. vii. 14), that He would be "God the Mighty, Father of the world to come" (Is. ix. 6), that He would be "The Lord our just one" (Jer. xxiii. 6), etc. 2. By the testimony of our Lord Himself before the high priest (Matt. xxvi. 64), and on other occasions when He states that He and the Father are one (John x. 38), etc. 3. By our Lord's miracles and prophecies, which are the divine guarantee of the truth of His claims.

II. Jesus Christ was born of the Father from all eternity. 1. This eternal generation is wonderful and incomprehensible, unlike human generation, and is best illustrated by the manner in which an idea is begotten of our mind. 2. Jesus Christ is equal to the Father in all things, as having the same Divine Nature. 3. Jesus Christ had no beginning, as He was begotten before all ages.

III. Jesus Christ is one person with two natures, — the nature of God and the nature of man. As God He was born of the Father before all ages; as man He was born of the Virgin Mary in time. Illustration: A man is but one person, although he is composed of body and soul; in a similar manner Christ is but one person, though He has both a human and a divine nature. The one person in Christ is the Person of God the Son.

Conclusion. 1. Faith in the Divinity of Christ is the foundation of the Christian religion and of our salvation. 2. Exhortation to this belief against prevalent errors. "Every one . . . that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32).

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article II of the Creed

CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, AND TRUE GOD

His only Son. In these words, mysteries more exalted with regard to Jesus are proposed to the faithful as objects of their belief and contemplation — that He is the Son of God, and true God, like the Father who begot Him from eternity. We also confess that He is the second person of the Blessed Trinity, equal in all things to the Father and the Holy Ghost; for in the divine Persons nothing unequal or unlike should exist, or even be imagined to exist, since we acknowledge the essence, will, and power of all to be one. This truth is clearly revealed in many of the oracles of inspiration and sublimely announced in this testimony of St. John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."[1]

HIS ETERNAL GENERATION IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE

But when we are told that Jesus is the Son of God, we are not to understand anything earthly or mortal in His birth, but are firmly to believe and piously to adore that birth by which, from all eternity, the Father begot the Son, — a mystery which reason cannot fully conceive or comprehend, and at the contemplation of which, overwhelmed as it were with admiration, we should exclaim with the prophet: "Who shall declare his generation?"[2] On this point, then, we are to believe that the Son is of the same nature, of the same power and wisdom, with the Father, as we more fully profess in these words of the Nicene Creed: "And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, born of the Father before all ages, God of God, true God of true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial to the Father, by whom all things were made."

Among the different comparisons employed to elucidate the mode and manner of this eternal generation that which is borrowed from thought seems to come nearest to its illustration, and hence St. John calls the Son "the Word;"[3] for as the mind, in some sort looking into and understanding itself, forms an

[1] John i. 1. [2] Is. liii. 8. [3] John i. 1.

image of itself, which theologians express by the term "word," so God, as far as we may compare human things to divine, understanding Himself, begets the eternal Word. Better, however, to contemplate what faith proposes, and in the sincerity of our souls believe and confess that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, — as God, begotten of the Father before all ages; as man, born in time of Mary, his Virgin Mother.

HIS UNITY OF PERSON

While we thus acknowledge His twofold nativity, we believe Him to be one Son, because His divine and human natures meet in one person. As to His divine generation He has no brethren or coheirs, being the only begotten Son of the Father, while we mortals are the work of His hands. But if we consider His birth as man, He not only calls many by the name of brethren, but regards them as brethren — they are those who by faith have received Christ the Lord, and who really, and by works of charity, approve the faith which they internally profess; and hence it is that He is called by the Apostle, "the first born amongst many brethren."[1]

Sermons

The Second Person: True God

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

I. *"What think you of Christ?"*

"What think you of Christ?" — a question, my dear brethren, formulated nearly two thousand years ago by Him concerning whom it is asked; a question imperative and insistent, the tones of which have not ceased and will not cease to re-echo through the world; a question which, whether they will or whether they will not, forces itself upon the attention of mankind.

It is a question all-important. How much depends upon the answer? Is there a Saviour from sin? Is there One who will lift me up when I have fallen, who will set my feet upon the Rock? Is there One to whom I can turn in my misery and defilement, knowing that He hath power to cleanse and save? Is there

[1] Rom. viii. 29.

One to whom I can go in trouble and perplexity, knowing that He hath suffered too, that He can sympathize, can enlighten, for in Him is all the wisdom and knowledge of God? Is there a strong Helper, man even as I, One who was tempted, even as I, yet One who is sinless, to whom I can look as the perfect man, who hath conquered sin, and death, and hell; who being true man, my brother, flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone, is yet also God, the King Eternal, offering to me the riches of His mercy and His grace, whereby I too may become like to Him, and may save my soul? What hope, what consolation, what a fount of courage and joy and peace if we can answer these questions with a triumphant "Yes!" Whether we can or not depends upon the answer to the question of the Master Himself — "What think you of Christ?"

II. *The Answer.*

What do we think of Christ? We think and we say, we most firmly and assuredly believe, that which Jesus said of Himself — that which the Holy Catholic Church, with the living voice of her continuous tradition, pronounces now, and has pronounced throughout the ages, concerning her Lord and Master from the day when, in the persons of the holy apostles and disciples, she saw Him, in the days of her infancy, ascending to the "right hand of the Father." And, blessed be God, to those questions which I have just asked we *can* and *do* reply with a glad affirmative, because through the mercy of God we are able, under the guidance of that Church which Jesus Christ established, to answer aright the question of all questions, "What think you of Christ?"

Never perhaps was there a time in the world's history when men's minds were fuller of anxious interrogations upon all that concerns human life, — its origin, its meaning, its final destiny. This is not an age of quiet, peaceful faith; of acceptance of the teaching of authority. Everything is brought to the test of human reason: not only all theories, but the most sacred beliefs of mankind, are cast into the crucible of inquiry. We need not fear the ultimate result. The truth must and will prevail. But there are sad losses in the meantime; the faith of many is being destroyed, and with it the glorious hope of the future, and the

love and charity which alone can make this desert earth to blossom with those noble and gracious virtues which Christian charity — Christian love of God and of men for God's sake — brings in its train.

There is every reason, then, for us Catholics to rouse ourselves; we may not, in the circumstances of our times, lull ourselves to sleep in selfish enjoyment of the truth which is ours. *The times and the necessities of so many souls — souls, my brethren, dear to God as ours, redeemed like ours by the Precious Blood of Jesus — the necessities of these souls, I say, demand that every Catholic shall be an apostle of the truth.*

You must not leave this to your priests; they have all the work upon their shoulders that they can well perform. You must share their work, under their leadership and guidance. You must be apostles. I do not say that you must throw yourselves into any and every question that is mooted now about religion. No, indeed; far from it. That would be dangerous to your souls and to your faith. You must leave *that* work to those who by their office and by their training are fitted to do it without peril. No; the question of religion and of religious truth is settled for you. You possess, thank God for it, you possess the holy gift of faith, you are firmly established upon that rock; but you can and ought, each according to his capacity and opportunities, to stretch out from your secure position a helping hand to those who are being carried away to destruction in the bewildering currents of a sea of perplexity and doubt. How are you to do this? First and foremost, by your good and holy lives; but also by a firm and intelligent grasp of the principles of our holy religion. Not in the spirit of scepticism or criticism, but in the spirit of a humble and thankful faith, you must inform yourselves to the best of your ability concerning the doctrines of the Catholic Church, your Mother, that you may be able to give a reason for the faith that is in you; that being yourselves "instructed in the way of the Lord," you may not only save your own souls, but help others on the way of salvation. Our Holy Father the Pope, who at the beginning of his pontificate set before him as his object "to restore all things in Jesus Christ," has pointed out the paramount importance of good and thorough instruction in the truths of

religion as a means of gaining that great end, and has traced the evils which afflict society within and without the Church to ignorance of religious truth. And on no point ought a Catholic to be better instructed than on the doctrine of the Church concerning Our Blessed Lord and Saviour, the teachings in which she gives a complete answer to that ever recurring question, "What think you of Christ?" There are thousands asking themselves that question, wishing that they could feel sure of the answer, yet feeling that they cannot. It is for us who have the light of faith, who have the truth about Jesus Christ, — it is for us to be so well grounded in the truth that we may bear unflinching testimony to that blessed truth in the face of the world, and so defeat the forces of incredulity and misbelief by the undaunted firmness of our own belief, and the thoroughness of our knowledge of those sacred doctrines which the Church delivers to us, as well as of the solid ground upon which is based her claim to teach mankind the truth of God.

III. *The Catholic Doctrine Developed.*

"What think you of Christ?" Ah, my dear brethren, a Catholic child can answer that question with a confidence and a completeness that are beyond the power of worldly science to supply to its votaries. Let us recall the words of the Apostles' Creed — that ancient confession of the Christian faith. "I believe . . . in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead." There is the answer; there, in simple language, is the faith of the Apostles and of the Church. Jesus Christ; God; the only begotten Son of the Father; Man, too; born of the Blessed Virgin-mother; God-made Man, who suffered and died for us; who rose again, who sits in glory, in our nature, on the throne of the Godhead; who is the dread Judge of all.

But to-day we are concerned with one point only; but that point is the very central truth of Christianity. "What think you of Christ?" asked Christ Himself. "Whose son is he?" And

"they say to him, David's. He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying: *The Lord* said to my Lord, sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word" (Matt. xxii. 42–46). They said the Christ should be the son of David; the Christ Himself who stood before them would have them know that He is more. And now, in our times, when men are giving various and conflicting replies — that He was a religious enthusiast; that He was the greatest and best of men; that in Him human nature reached its highest development; that in his quiet childhood the spirit of the old prophets entered into Him; that the Messianic hopes of His race took so strong a hold upon Him that He came first to desire and then to see their fulfilment in His own person. To these and all such solutions of the great question He Himself, through His own recorded words in Holy Scripture, through the voice of His Church, through her marvellous history and accomplishments, by the lives of His followers and imitators, the saints; by the very power of His religion over the hearts and minds of men, yes, and for those who have come to Him, by the spiritual experience of His mercy and His love — by these and other means Jesus Himself replies to the question: "If I am but what you say and no more, how do all these facts proclaim me God and Lord?" Yes, dear brethren, Jesus Christ is God; the Word of the Father; of one and the same nature or substance with Him; worthy, therefore, of the same worship and adoration and praise.

In the early ages of the Church — indeed from the very beginning of her history — the enemy of mankind raised up false teachers, who would have deprived our blessed Lord of the homage due to His Divinity. A remote tradition tells us that the apostle St. John wrote his Gospel for the express purpose of refuting certain heretics who denied that Christ was God. And he proclaimed the truth in those majestic words with which the fourth Gospel opens:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." "In the beginning with God," from all eternity, that is,

He was with God and He was God. He is the almighty Creator of heaven and earth. "All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made." And that eternal Word is none other than Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ, that is to say, is God-made-Man. The Second Person of the adorable Trinity become incarnate, having now two natures: the divine nature, which is His from all eternity; the human nature, which He took from His blessed Mother and made His own: for "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John i. 14).

God's providence has turned to good the errors and unbelief of men. The great Arian heresy of the fourth century forced the Church to express in terms of great precision, such as should allow of no escape from the truth by any subtlety of argument, the faith delivered to the saints, and held and taught by her from the beginning. To this end did the Church introduce into the Creed, which to this day we recite or sing in the Holy Mass, a word which for all times secures her doctrine against all misconception and all elusiveness of error. Jesus Christ, she proclaims, is *consubstantial* with the Father. The Arians were willing to exalt Christ high above all other creatures, but they denied His Godhead. They asserted that the Word was a creature, though the highest of creatures; made before all worlds, most perfect and closest to God of all created beings; worthy indeed, by His excellence, of the title "Son of God," nay, even to be called divine by reason of a certain mysterious participation of divinity conferred upon Him. Further, some of the Arian body were willing to go still further, and to say that the Word of God, Jesus Christ, possessed a nature *exactly similar* to the nature of God the Father. And we must keep in mind that they said this of the nature of the Word of God as He was before the Incarnation. To all these subtleties the Church had but one answer: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; and this doctrine of St. John she caused to be enshrined in that word *consubstantial*. Not the highest of creatures, not possessing a participation of divinity conferred upon Him; not even of a nature *similar* in all respects to that of the

Father — no, none of these statements would satisfy the Church; none of them would she nor could she admit of as reconcilable with the Holy Scriptures of which she and she alone is the authorized interpreter, or as consonant with her divinely guided teaching from apostolic times. No! The Word is *consubstantial* with the Father. What does that mean? It means, dear brethren, that there is but ONE divine nature, and that this one single divine nature is equally possessed of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; not divided or shared out among the Three, but wholly and entirely possessed by each one; so that the Father is all that is God; the Son is all that is God, and the Holy Ghost is all that is God. That divine nature, that Godhead, then, which Jesus Christ Our Lord has, is the very same identical and single divine nature or Godhead as that of the Father. In other words, there is one God, and the Father is that God; the Son also is that God, and the Holy Ghost is that God. Three Persons, but one God.

"Glory be to the Father, *through* the Son, and *in* the Holy Ghost," so Arius taught his followers to sing; "Glory be to the Father *and* to the Son *and* to the Holy Ghost" is the song, at once an aspiration of praise and a confession of the true faith, which the Holy Catholic Church puts into our mouth.

And, dear brethren, He, that gracious One on whom all our hopes are stayed; He, our Saviour; He who knelt in agony and hung upon the Cross; He who lives in heaven now to make intercession for us — He is that Son of God, God Himself, consubstantial with the Father, one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, who with Him are one God in Three Persons. "What think you of Christ?" He is the God of heaven and earth, made man for us and for our salvation.

"Who is Jesus Christ?" we ask our children in the simple words of our Catechism. "Jesus Christ is God the Son made man for us," they reply. "Is Jesus Christ truly God?" "Jesus Christ is truly God." "Why is Jesus Christ truly God?" "Because he has one and the same nature with the Father."

IV. *Other Proofs from the New Testament.*

But now let us gather from the New Testament some of the many proofs that confirm our faith in the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I have quoted to you already the words in which

St. John sets forth, in no uncertain tone, the central truth of Christianity, and the words in which our blessed Lord Himself put the Pharisees to silence, so that "no man durst ask Him any more questions." St. John, in the third chapter of his Gospel, sets before us a pathetic account of a ruler in Israel who, struck by the miracles of Jesus, came secretly by night to interrogate Him. "There was a man of the Pharisees," we read, "Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night, and said to him: Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God: for no man can do these signs which thou dost, unless God be with him." Then our blessed Lord spoke to him of the new birth, the birth of Baptism, "of water and the Holy Ghost," concluding His discourse in these words: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish; but may have life everlasting. For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting. . . . He that believeth in him is not judged. But he that doth not believe, is already judged: *because* he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God." I have chosen this text out of many for the reason that in it Our Lord insists upon that fact which the Church proclaims in her use of the word "consubstantial." Jesus declares Himself to be the "only begotten" Son of the Father. He, Our Lord says, who believes this will not be judged — that is, will not be judged with the judgment of condemnation: he that pertinaciously and wilfully refuses to believe this fact is already judged, already condemned, in that by his unbelief, and so long as he remains in his unbelief, he withdraws himself from the way of salvation.

What, then, is the force and significance of the expression twice used here by Jesus Christ concerning Himself, — the only begotten Son of the Father? Even God Himself, dear brethren, speaking to men, must make use of human language; must present divine truths to us under figures of things which we understand. Calling Himself the only begotten of the Father, He teaches us that He, and He alone, stands in a similar relation to His heavenly Father as an only child does to an earthly father.

And what is that relation? A son is begotten by his father; the father communicates to his child his own nature — human nature, that is. I and you are human beings because our parents were human beings, and communicated to us the same nature that they themselves possessed. So, then, when Jesus Christ tells us that He is the only begotten Son of God, He tells us that He possesses the same nature as His Father. Human nature, indeed, is multiplied in many individuals of the species; and it is here that the figure used by Our Lord falls short of the divine reality, as all human language must necessarily fall short of things divine. But reason comes to our aid, and we are able, in the light of faith and by the aid of other revealed doctrines, to see where the figure fails. The divine nature, we know, is one and single — though belonging equally to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is not multiplied. So, then, for Jesus Christ to say that He is the only begotten of the Father is equivalent to asserting that He is very God, that He is of the same, one, identical substance or nature as His Father; and this, indeed, is the truth which He teaches us in His words to Nicodemus.

Turn to the fifth chapter of this same Gospel of St. John. It is the Sabbath day. Our blessed Lord has just healed a paralytic. "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath. But Jesus answered them: *My Father worketh until now; and I work.* Hereupon therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he did not only break the sabbath, but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God" (John v. 16–18).

The Jews, dear brethren, showed by their action that they understood the significance of these words better than many a Christian of to-day, who perhaps reads them in but a cursory manner. In truth, they contain a definite statement by Our Lord of His perfect equality with the Father. The Jewish people had formed a false idea of the Sabbath, leading them to an absurdly rigorous code of laws concerning what was lawful to do on the Sabbath day. Misunderstanding the statement of Holy Scripture that God rested on the seventh day from the work of creation, they lost sight of the truth that nevertheless God is always acting, preserving, sustaining His creation, so that, as

St. Paul tells us, "in him we live, and move, and are." Our Lord would recall to their minds that God is ever working in His creation; that nothing could exist without the active concurrence of Him who upholds "all things by the word of his power" (Heb. i. 3); that in all physical laws, as well as in all the movements of the spirit, God is acting, preserving, upholding, moving His creation. And in this continual action of God He associates Himself on a perfect equality with His Father, and from the fact of God's continual activity justifies His own action. God did not cease to act on the seventh day: I cease not to act. "My Father worketh till now; and I work" (John v. 17). The Jews understood Him. To their mind, who heard Him speak, He claimed divinity and nothing less. Our Lord, far from receding from His claim, goes on in the following verses to emphasize it. Time will not allow me to quote the whole passage, but the conclusion must not be passed over: "He who honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father, who hath sent him."

V. *Conclusion.*

Yes, dear brethren, Jesus Christ is God. This is the doctrine taught concerning the coming Messias by the prophets of old time; this is His own testimony of Himself. At the last supper Philip said to Him, "Show us the Father." Jesus answered: "Have I been so long a time with you; and have you not known me?" Here Our Lord implies that they ought to have known; that He had already told them with sufficient plainness. "Philip," He continues, "he that seeth me seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, Show us the Father? Do you not believe, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?"

The testimony of His enemies shows that He made this claim. Miracles and the fulfilment of prophecy establish its truth. The Church from the beginning has taught it; yes, and the work of Jesus in the world to-day, the work of His Church, the lives of His saints, attest the power of her name and prove that He is divine.

An objector might say — You are proving the divinity of Jesus chiefly from what He said of Himself. Yes, in part that is true. Like Himself, we appeal also to His works; but granting the objection we may ask, and with confidence, Is He not to be

trusted? The greatest enemies of the doctrine of His divinity have freely acknowledged that His character is simply perfect. "We often ask ourselves," says a modern Catholic writer (Père Rose, O.P., *Studies on the Gospels.* Intro. p. xvi), "how men . . . can possibly fail to understand how they destroy [Jesus] when they suspect His sincerity, representing Him as a visionary, the victim of the most monstrous illusions." And again: "How can these critics not see that the more they exalt the man in Jesus Christ the more they strengthen the testimony He gave of Himself touching His celestial origin, His divine sonship?" (*ib.*)

Yes, indeed. By the confession of all, the life of Jesus was a perfect life: there is no flaw to be found in it. He said that He was God; and we believe Him. And if that is not enough to satisfy an honest mind we may say to such what He Himself said to His slow-minded disciple: "Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? Otherwise believe for the very works' sake" (John xiv. 11, 12).

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

SUBJECT

CHRIST IS OUR LORD

TEXT

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. — LUKE iii. 4.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. To-day's Gospel opens with an enumeration of a number of the temporal lords that ruled on earth in the time of Christ, and concludes with the inauguration of the reign of the Messiah, "the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. vi. 15), of whose kingdom "there shall be no end" (Luke i. 33).

It was customary in the Orient, when monarchs were expected to visit their subjects, to prepare in advance the roads and highways in order that the progress of the royal party might be made with ease and comfort. St. John reminds us to-day that we should make a similar preparation for the coming of our Divine Lord at Christmas.

I. **Christ as God is our Lord.** 1. God is the Lord and Master of us and of all things, because He is the Creator and Preserver of all. But Christ as God is one with the Father (John x. 30). 2. Holy Scripture expressly says that all things were made by the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity (John i. 3). "All creatures, both great and small, those that dwell above and those on the earth, spirits and bodies, all alike come from the creative Word" (St. Augustine). "It is He who created all; it is He who gave order to all, who gave the heavenly bodies their movement, the sun its light, the ocean its limits, the earth its fecundity; . . . it is He who moves and governs all, and preserves the world in its admirable unity" (St. Athanasius).

II. **Christ as man is our Lord.** 1. Christ, by His own blood, has purchased all mankind. "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold and silver, but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter i. 18, 19); "you are bought with a great price" (1 Cor. vi. 20). Hence we are Christ's property, and He is our Lord. 2. In a special sense Christ is the Lord of Christians, for in Baptism we are enrolled under His standard and promise to be His faithful followers. Our name of **Christian**, disciple of Christ, reminds us of His sovereignty and of our duty towards Him. 3. A particular title that Christ has to our loyal service is that He came to us not as a dread sovereign, surrounded by pomp and power, but as the Prince of Peace in goodness and mildness.

Conclusion. 1. The Christian prepares the way of the Lord by removing from his soul all that can impede the coming of Christ to him. 2. Exhortation to proximate preparation for the feast of Christmas: (a) "every valley shall be filled," i.e., avoid sins of omission by making new resolutions and efforts to practice virtue; (b) "every mountain and hill shall be brought low," i.e., sins of commission, mortal and venial, should be repented of and atoned for; (c) "the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough ways plain," i.e., all injustice, uncharitableness, wrangling, dissensions etc., shou'd give way to righteousness and good will among men (Luke iii. 5).

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article II of the Creed

WHY OUR SAVIOUR IS CALLED BY DIFFERENT NAMES

Our Lord. Of our Saviour many things are recorded in Scripture, some of which clearly apply to Him as God and some as man, because from His different natures He received the different properties which belong to each. Hence, we say with truth that Christ is Almighty, Eternal, Infinite, and these attributes He has from His divine nature; again, we say of Him that He suffered,

died, and rose again, which manifestly are properties compatible only with His human nature.

WHY CALLED "OUR LORD"

Besides these terms, there are others common to both natures; as when in this article of the Creed we say "our Lord," a name strictly applicable to both. As He is eternal as well as the Father, so is He Lord of all things equally with the Father; and as He and the Father are not the one, one God, and the other, another God, but one and the same God, so likewise He and the Father are not the one, one Lord, and the other, another Lord. As man, He is also for many reasons appropriately called "our Lord," and first because He is our Redeemer, who delivered us from sin. This is the doctrine of St. Paul. "He humbled himself," says the Apostle, "becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."[1] And of Himself He said, after His resurrection: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth."[2] He is also called "Lord" because in one person both natures, the human and the divine, are united; and though He had not died for us, He would have yet deserved, by this admirable union, to be constituted common Lord of all created things, particularly of those who in all the fervor of their souls obey and serve Him.

MATTER FOR EXHORTATION SUPPLIED BY THIS ARTICLE

It remains, therefore, that the pastor exhort the faithful to the consideration of these His claims to the title of "Our Lord"; that we who, taking our name from Him, are called Christians, and who cannot be ignorant of the extent of His favors, particularly in having enabled us to understand all these things by faith, may know the strict obligation we, above all others, are under, of devoting and consecrating ourselves forever, like faithful servants, to our Redeemer and our Lord. This we prom-

[1] Phil. ii. 8–11. [2] Matt. xxviii. 18.

ised when at the baptismal font we were initiated and introduced into the Church of God; for we then declared that we renounced the devil and the world, and gave ourselves unreservedly to Jesus Christ. But if to be enrolled as soldiers of Christ we consecrated ourselves by so holy and solemn a profession to our Lord, what punishments should we not deserve were we, after our entrance into the Church, and after having known the will and laws of God and received the grace of the sacraments, to form our lives upon the laws and maxims of the world and the devil; as if, when cleansed in the waters of baptism, we had pledged our fidelity to the world and to the devil, and not to Christ our Lord and Saviour! What heart so cold as not to be inflamed with love by the benevolence and beneficence exercised toward us by so great a Lord, who, though holding us in His power and dominion as slaves ransomed by His blood, yet embraces us with such ardent love as to call us not servants, but friends and brethren?[1] This, assuredly, supplies the most just, and perhaps the strongest, claim to induce us always to acknowledge, venerate, and adore Him as "our Lord."

Sermons

The Second Article of the Creed

BY THE REV. P. HEHEL, S.J.

When in the first article of the creed we say, "I believe in God the Father," we confess thereby the existence of only one God, the oneness of the Godhead. But we confess also at the same time the distinction of the Persons who are in the Deity when we say, "I believe in God the Father." We explain this distinction of persons more explicitly when in the second article we say, "and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord." According to this we declare:

First, that we believe Christ to be the natural Son of the Eternal Heavenly Father and the Second Person of the Godhead in the same pre-eminent manner as St. John gives testimony of Him when he says we "confess that Jesus is the Son

[1] John xv. 14.

of God" (1 John iv. 15); therefore that Father and Son are one God in substance and distinct only in Person.

Secondly, we confess of this Second Person that He is the only Son of the Heavenly Father. We indicate thereby that God has no other natural Son, who is begotten of the Father from eternity, equal to Him in substance and in nature. For although the Heavenly Father as Creator of all mankind is at the same time also the Father of all, yet we cannot be called the natural sons or children of God, but only adopted sons, because He has graciously adopted us as His children. For St. Paul also writes to the Romans: "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)." We have thereby become children of God, heirs of heaven, and co-heirs with Christ; but Christ is the only begotten, the only natural Son of the Heavenly Father, and He has no equal.

Thirdly, we confess that this natural only Son of God is called Jesus Christ. With this name we testify that He is also our Redeemer and Saviour. For the Angel called Him Jesus before He was born of Mary, because He was to save His people from their sins. We call Him also Christ, i.e., the anointed of the Lord, to express thereby that the Son of God is at the same time man and God, consequently the true Messiah, whom God sent into the world for the redemption of His people, whom He anointed as High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech, and who offered Himself as the sacrifice of expiation for the whole world.

Fourthly, we confess of the only Son of God that He is our Lord when we say: "And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord." We express thereby that Christ has power and authority to control our whole being, that He is Lord over all we possess, over life and death. This right was acquired by Christ:

1. Through the redemption. Christ became our Lord by buying us with the infinite ransom of His own most precious blood from the bondage of the devil.

2. He is also our Lord because He has received from His Heavenly Father the most absolute power to rule over all mankind and the choirs of angels, over heaven, earth, and hell. Christ Himself told us this when He said: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18).

3. He is our Lord because according to the Godhead He is one with the Father, therefore He is also our Creator and Author, who has the right to control and command His creatures as He wills.

4. He is in particular our Lord because we are Catholic Christians, and He is the Head of the Catholic Church. We are united with Him as members to the body which is led by the head. This is all contained in the words of the second article, and this we believe and confess when we say, "And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord."

But we have much to learn herefrom in order that our life may be conformable to our faith. We confess that Christ is our lawful, absolute Lord, to whom we are subject in all things, who can condemn us to eternal perdition in soul and in body. No one except God has such authority upon earth. For although the rulers of this world punish their subjects, or may even kill them, yet the soul is not subject to their authority. Hence Christ says: "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. x. 28). Oh, how unreasonably you behave when you esteem a man more than God, when you would rather offend God than displease a man! It is true you do not perceive this now, for money is being pressed into your hand. You are invited to well-spread tables. All this dazzles you. But it is a human recompense. You will hold on to it until this earthly existence ceases. Then another kingdom will open before you where only one Lord rules, and distributes everlasting punishment or eternal recompense. Do not forget this, dear Christian, so that you may so serve men as not to lose the reward of the Eternal Lord.

Christ Our Lord

BY THE REV. BEDE JARRETT, O.P.

I. With a solemn recitation of the names of the neighboring and dominant rulers, the opening of the ministry of the Baptist is announced. "The word of the Lord" comes to him in the desert; and its purport is to make him "prepare the way of the Lord." He, the Baptist, is no more than a herald, and after him comes one "preferred before him," the Lord of all. Indeed,

there is no part of the New Testament that so thoroughly exalts the Saviour of mankind as the whole set of these four Advent Gospels, wherein, despite his immense prestige with the Pharisees, the Baptist unfailingly insists upon the central figure of Christ as the real character round which even his own life revolves. With all his success as a leader, a success that Our Lord Himself made use of when He put to the Pharisees His unanswerable question, "The Baptism of John, was it from heaven?" St. John never ceased to repeat that his own position was entirely subordinate to that of Christ, that his own calling, his creation even, was justified only on the supposition that Christ should come into His Kingdom and so give to the life of His forerunner its coherence.

II. Indeed this is the very point that we have as Catholics never to forget, — the absolute necessity of belief in Christ our Lord as the real motive of God's act in calling us into existence at all. A Christian begins by accepting the revealed statement of a God, who is the Creator and Upholder and Governor of the world. Secondly, he accepts no less absolutely the fact of the existence of the present world. He believes in God; he knows that the world exists. Now herein precisely lies the first and fundamental difficulty against all religion. God, from the very meaning of the term, must have been completely happy in the inner life of the Blessed Trinity, Father knowing Himself in the Son, and from them both proceeding the Holy Ghost, the love personified that sprang naturally out of the very knowledge God had of Himself. Here was the perfect, completely blissful life of the Three-in-one. From all eternity (to use human and faulty terminology for things beyond the narrow boundaries of human thought), there had been this endless and self-determined life of God. Why should there have ever come into it the idea of Creation? Or more accurately, what motive could possibly have influenced God's action in calling into existence outside Himself inferior beings, limited, capable of sin? We know the facts of creation; we know that God is, — that we are sure of, — but what we want to get at is the reason why He created at all? Not need, for He was perfectly happy; not compulsion, for God cannot be compelled; not a power independent of Himself, for

then He would cease to be God and become merely a powerful Spirit, in no sense divine. The answer can only be that no motive other than Himself could have so urged Him. He created us for Himself. But that merely restates the whole question; it does not answer it. We want to know precisely what in Himself called for Creation.

III. There is no adequate answer, nor can there be. God is infinite, His actions are infinite. I in my finiteness can understand neither the one nor the other; yet in the opening of the Gospel of St. John, said by the priest at the ending of the Mass, we get just a hint, mysterious, mystical, that shows us where the solution will one day be found: "All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing." I must realize that Creation was made through the Word, and that in consequence He was the Lord of the world, and that finally He alone could redeem the world. The whole of creation is due to the Father; yet the creation was effected through the Word. Hence the Word, Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, becomes as a necessary result the Master of Creation. He is the Head of the race; He is the first-born of all creatures: all power in heaven and earth is given to Him; all judgment is of the Son; without His name we cannot be saved. The idea is not very clearly expressed nor can be; but in some fashion we do see that somehow the only answer ultimately to be discovered which shall explain to us the motive behind the act of Creation will be connected with the Son of God and will show us more fully than we can here grasp the overpowering Lordship that He has even in His incarnate nature over the world. It is the reason also why we can only reach back in knowledge to the Father through the Son, since it is through the Son that the Father created us: Father, Son, creation; creation, Son, Father. The Lordship, therefore, of Jesus Christ is essential and universal, since it must touch creation at every point. He is the Lord of Glory, but no less the Lord of present life, its happenings, its privations, its fine purposes. Through Him, therefore, we are in touch with each other, and just as no man can come to the Father but by Him, so equally in no other way than by Him can we come to the Brotherhood.

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THE FEAST OF CHRISTMAS

SUBJECT

THE CONCEPTION AND NATIVITY OF CHRIST

TEXT

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. — JOHN i. 14.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. In the three Masses that are said to-day the Church calls to our minds the threefold birth of our Lord: His birth of the Father before all ages, His birth from the Blessed Virgin Mary twenty centuries ago, and His birth through grace in the souls of the just. But the central thought of this day's feast is the temporal birth of our Lord in the stable at Bethlehem.

I. The Gospel Narratives of the Conception and Birth of Christ. 1. The Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was the chosen Mother of God. Mary consented, and thereupon the Mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished (Luke i. 26–38). 2. Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to be enrolled. There Christ was born in a stable. Angels announced His birth to the Shepherds (Luke ii. 1–20).

II. "Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost." 1. The meaning of these words of the Creed: Christ's conception was miraculous; a Divine Person took human flesh in a manner transcending the order of nature. 2. All three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity were authors of this mystery, since all external works of

the Godhead are common to the three Divine Persons; but it is especially attributed to the Holy Ghost because it is a work of love. 3. The body of our Lord was formed from the flesh and blood of the Blessed Virgin, who is therefore truly the Mother of God. 4. The soul of Christ was filled with all grace from the moment of His conception. 5. The Divinity was united to Christ's body and soul from the first instant of conception, and hence Christ is the Son of God by nature, and not by adoption.

III. "Born of the Virgin Mary." 1. The birth of Christ was miraculous, since He was born of a virgin. 2. The virgin birth was foretold in prophecy: "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son" (Is. vii. 14); it was prefigured in many types of the Old Testament, e.g. in the gate of the sanctuary which Ezechiel saw closed (Ezech. xliv. 2); in the bush which Moses saw burn without being consumed (Exod. iii. 2), etc. 3. Comparison between Mary and Eve: Eve brought malediction on the human race, Mary brought Christ to us; Eve bore children in sorrow, Mary brought forth the Son of God in joy, etc.

Conclusion. How we should profit by the birth of Christ: 1. We should adore this mystery through *faith,* since it transcends our understanding. 2. We should meditate on this feast with *gladness,* because it establishes peace between God and man (Luke ii. 14), because in it all the nations of the earth are blessed (Gen. xxii. 18), because through it the goodness of God shines forth with incomparable splendor.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article III of the Creed

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.

Incarnation of the Son of God

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost. From what has been said in the preceding Article, the faithful are given to understand that in delivering us from the relentless tyranny of Satan, God has conferred a singular and invaluable blessing on the

human race; but if we place before our eyes the economy of redemption, in it the goodness and beneficence of God shine forth with incomparable splendor and magnificence.

The pastor, then, will enter on the exposition of this third Article by developing the grandeur of this mystery, which the Sacred Scriptures very frequently propose to our consideration as the principal source of our eternal salvation. Its meaning he will teach to be, that we believe and confess that the same Jesus Christ, our only Lord, the Son of God, when He assumed human flesh for us in the womb of the Virgin, was not conceived like other men, from the seed of man, but in a manner transcending the order of nature, that is, by the power of the Holy Ghost;[1] so that the same person, remaining God as He was from eternity, became man,[2] what He was not before. That such is the meaning of these words is clear from the confession of the Holy Council of Constantinople, which says: "who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and became incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and WAS MADE MAN." The same truth we also find unfolded by St. John the Evangelist, who imbibed from the bosom of the Saviour Himself the knowledge of this most profound mystery. When he had thus declared the nature of the divine Word: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," he concludes, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."[3]

Thus, "the Word," which is a person of the divine nature, assumed human nature in such a manner that the person of both natures is one and the same: and hence this admirable union preserved the actions and properties of both natures; and, as we read in St. Leo, that great pontiff, "the lowliness of the inferior was not consumed in the glory of the superior, nor did the assumption of the inferior diminish the glory of the superior."[4]

THE WORK NOT OF ONE, BUT OF THE THREE PERSONS OF THE TRINITY

As an explanation of the words in which this Article is expressed is not to be omitted, the pastor will teach that when we say that the Son of God was conceived by the power of the

[1] Matt. i. 20. [2] John i. 14. [3] John i. 1, 14. [4] Serm. i. de Nat.

Holy Ghost, we do not mean that this Person alone of the Holy Trinity accomplished the mystery of the incarnation. Although the Son alone assumed human nature, yet all the Persons of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, were authors of this mystery. It is a principle of Christian faith that whatever God does extrinsically is common to the three Persons, and that one neither does more than nor acts without another. But that one emanates from another cannot be common to all, for the Son is begotten of the Father only, the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, but whatever proceeds from them extrinsically is the work of the three Persons without difference of any sort, and of this latter description is the incarnation of the Son of God.

WHY SPECIALLY ATTRIBUTED TO THE HOLY GHOST

Of those things, however, that are common to all, the Sacred Scriptures often attribute some to one person, some to another. Thus, to the Father they attribute power over all things; to the Son, wisdom; to the Holy Ghost, love; and hence, as the mystery of the Incarnation manifests the singular and boundless love of God towards us, it is therefore in some sort peculiarly attributed to the Holy Ghost.

IN WHAT NATURAL AND IN WHAT SUPERNATURAL

In this mystery we perceive that some things were done which transcend the order of nature, some by the power of nature. Thus, in believing that the body of Christ was formed from the most pure blood of his Virgin Mother we acknowledge the operation of human nature, this being a law common to the formation of all human bodies. But what surpasses the order of nature and human comprehension is, that as soon as the Blessed Virgin assented to the announcement of the angel in these words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word,"[1] the most sacred body of Christ was immediately formed, and to it was united a rational soul; and thus in the same instant of time He was perfect God and perfect man. That this was the astonishing and admirable work of the Holy Ghost

[1] Luke i. 38.

cannot be doubted; for according to the order of nature the rational soul is united to the body only after a certain time.

THE DIVINITY UNITED TO THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

Again (and this should overwhelm us with astonishment), as soon as the soul of Christ was united to His body, the Divinity became united to both; and thus at the same time His body was formed and animated, and the Divinity united to body and soul.

THE VIRGIN TRULY MOTHER OF GOD AND MAN

Hence, at the same instant He was perfect God and perfect man, and the most Holy Virgin, having at the same moment conceived God and man, is truly and properly called Mother of God and man. This the Angel signified to her when he said: "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High."[1] The event verified the prophecy of Isaias: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son."[2] Elizabeth also, when, filled with the Holy Ghost, she understood the conception of the Son of God, declared the same truth in these words: "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"[3]

THE SOUL OF CHRIST REPLENISHED FROM HIS CONCEPTION WITH ALL GRACE

But as the body of Christ was formed of the pure blood of the immaculate Virgin without the aid of man, as we have already said, and by the sole operation of the Holy Ghost, so also, at the moment of His conception, His soul was replenished with an overflowing fulness of the Spirit of God, and a superabundance of all graces; for God gave not to Him, as to others adorned with graces and holiness, His Spirit by measure, as St. John testifies,[4] but poured into His soul the plenitude of all graces so abundantly that "of his fulness we all have received."[5]

[1] Luke i. 31, 32. [2] Is. vii. 14. [3] Luke i. 43.
[4] John iii. 34. [5] John i. 16.

CHRIST THE SON OF GOD BY NATURE, NOT BY ADOPTION

Although possessing that Spirit by which holy men attain the adoption of sons of God, He cannot, however, be called the adopted Son of God; for being the Son of God by nature, the grace, or name of adoption, can on no account be deemed applicable to Him.

HOW WE ARE TO REAP FRUIT UNTO SALVATION FROM THE BELIEF OF THIS ARTICLE

These heads comprise the substance of what appeared to us to demand explanation regarding the admirable mystery of the conception. To reap from them abundant fruit for salvation the faithful should particularly recall, and frequently reflect, that it is God who assumed human flesh, but that the manner of its assumption transcends the limits of our comprehension, not to say of our powers of expression; and finally, that He vouchsafed to become man in order that we mortals may be regenerated children of God. When to these subjects they shall have given mature consideration, let them, in the humility of faith, believe and adore all the mysteries contained in this Article, and not indulge a curious inquisitiveness by investigating and scrutinizing them — an attempt scarcely ever unattended with danger.

CHRIST BORN OF A VIRGIN

Born of the Virgin Mary. These words comprise another part of this Article of the Creed, in the exposition of which the pastor should exercise considerable diligence; because the faithful are bound to believe that Christ our Lord was not only conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, but was also "born of the Virgin Mary." The words of the Angel who first announced the happy tidings to the world declare with what transports of joy and emotions of delight the belief of this mystery should be meditated by us. "Behold," says he, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people."[1] The song chanted by the heavenly host clearly conveys the same sentiments. "Glory," say they, "to God in the highest; and on earth peace

[1] Luke ii. 10.

to men of good will."[1] Then began the fulfilment of the splendid promise made by Almighty God to Abraham, — that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed;[2] for Mary, whom we truly proclaim and venerate as Mother of God, because she brought forth Him who is at once God and man, was descended from King David.[3] But as the conception itself transcends the order of nature, so also the birth of the man-God presents to our contemplation nothing but what is divine.

THE MANNER OF HIS BIRTH

Besides — a circumstance wonderful beyond expression or conception — He is born of His Mother without any diminution of her maternal virginity; and as He afterwards went forth from the sepulchre while it was closed and sealed, and entered the room in which His disciples were assembled, the doors being shut,[4] or (not to depart from natural events which we witness every day) as the rays of the sun penetrate without breaking or injuring in the least the substance of glass, so after a like but more incomprehensible manner did Jesus Christ come forth from His mother's womb without injury to her maternal virginity, which, being immaculate and perpetual, forms the just theme of our eulogy. This was the work of the Holy Ghost, who at the conception and birth of the Son so favored the Virgin Mother as to impart to her fecundity and yet preserve inviolate her perpetual virginity.

CHRIST COMPARED TO ADAM, MARY TO EVE

The Apostle sometimes calls Jesus Christ the second Adam, and institutes a comparison between Him and the first Adam; for as in the first all men die, so in the second all are made alive:[5] and as in the natural order Adam was the father of the human race, so in the supernatural order Christ is the author of grace and of glory. The Virgin Mother we may also compare to Eve, making the second Eve, that is Mary, correspond to the first, as we have already shown that the second Adam, that is Christ, corresponds to the first Adam. By believing the serpent, Eve

[1] Luke ii. 14. [2] Gen. xxii. 18. [3] Matt. i. 1, 6.
[4] John xx. 19. [5] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

brought malediction and death on mankind;[1] and Mary, by believing the Angel, became the instrument of the divine goodness in bringing life and benediction to the human race.[2] From Eve we are born children of wrath; from Mary we have received Jesus Christ, and through Him are regenerated children of grace. To Eve it was said: "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children."[3] Mary was exempt from this law, for preserving her virginal integrity inviolate she brought forth Jesus the Son of God without experiencing, as we have already said, any sense of pain.

TYPES AND FIGURES OF HIS CONCEPTION AND NATIVITY

The mysteries of this admirable conception and nativity being, therefore, so great and so numerous, it accorded with the views of Divine Providence to signify them by many types and prophesies. Hence the holy Fathers understood many things which we meet in the Sacred Scriptures to relate to them, particularly that gate of the Sanctuary which Ezechiel saw closed;[4] the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which became a great mountain and filled the universe;[5] the rod of Aaron, which alone budded of all the rods of the princes of Israel;[6] and the bush which Moses saw burn without being consumed.[7] The holy Evangelist describes in detail the history of the birth of Christ;[8] but, as the pastor can easily recur to the Sacred Volume, it is unnecessary for us to say more on the subject.

Sermons

The Incarnation

BY THE REV. THOMAS F. BURKE, C.S.P.

I. The corner-stone of the whole structure of Christianity, my dear brethren, is the fact of the divinity of its Founder. Upon that fact is based the authoritative character of all Christian teachings; and whatever we accept as essential to the gaining of eternal life is considered essential for the very reason that it was proclaimed by a Divine Voice. Useful and beautiful though

[1] Eccl. xxv. 33.
[2] Eph. i. 3.
[3] Gen. iii. 16.
[4] Ezech. xliv. 2.
[5] Dan. ii. 35.
[6] Num. xvii. 8.
[7] Exod. iii. 2.
[8] Luke ii.

other doctrines may be in themselves, their value rests upon the truth of this primary one, the divinity of the Saviour. As in the solar system all things are centred in the sun, dependent upon it for their very existence, and as all things would fail with the going out of its light and the ceasing of its heat, so all the dogmas of our faith are centred in Christ's divinity, and were that great fact removed they would be worthless; in fact they would cease to exist.

The word which has been chosen to denote the accomplishment of this great mystery of God's coming upon earth is "Incarnation." In a sense we may consider the manner of its accomplishment apart from the fact, though necessarily in such a consideration the fact itself is supposed. Thus, in the natural world, for example, our thought may be concerned with the fact of electricity or with the manner of its generation; or, again, we may dwell upon the fact of a falling body, or upon the reason for this phenomenon. Thus, too, to take another Catholic doctrine, we draw a distinction between the fact of Christ's real presence in the Blessed Sacrament and the process by which it is brought about, namely, transubstantiation. In such a way we may, too, distinguish between the divinity of Jesus Christ and the manner in which that fact is brought about, namely, Incarnation.

On the other hand, however, it must be clear that whatever goes to establish the Incarnation is likewise a proof of Christ's divinity, for the former includes the latter, just as whatever proves transubstantiation is a valid argument for the real objective presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

With this preliminary, then, it is well for us, in a day when, among many, if the Incarnation is not entirely denied it is at least but vaguely understood, to recall the Christian doctrine upon this subject, to see at least some of the reasons for its acceptance and to understand something of the wonderful bearing it has upon our lives.

II. When the name of Jesus Christ is mentioned there naturally rises before us the vision of a man who trod this earth centuries ago in living flesh and blood; there comes the figure

of one who drew men to Himself, who won men by the gentleness of His manner, by the kindness of His words, by His teaching of the future life; of one who, more than all other teachers and prophets combined, exercised an influence for good upon humanity; of one who in His life and conduct brought again to light the truth and power that were lying dormant or corrupted in the intellect and the heart and the will of man. All admit that Christ was a human being. Born of woman, He grew from childhood to youth and manhood. He lived, He suffered, He died as man. But the ages in which Christ has been preached and the multitudes to whom Christ has been made known unite in proclaiming Him to be more than man — even to be God Himself. Voices of opposition indeed have been heard in the land, but the great multitude of Christian peoples are united in accepting Christ as the Incarnate Son of God.

What does that belief mean? Literally, "incarnation" means the taking on of flesh. Applied to the Son of God, it is that act by which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity came upon earth and took to Himself a human nature such as that which we possess. This does not mean that human nature became divine nature, for this would be a contradiction in terms. It means that the Divine Person, in whom the divine nature is complete, united to the divine nature in that one person the nature of man, so that we have the mystery of the two natures, that of God and that of man, existing in the one Person who is divine.

Nature and person — let us see if we can grasp a little of the meaning of these words. As I look about me in this church to-day I see a number of human beings. All of you have something in common, something that is a distinguishing mark, that separates you from all other creatures, from the angels in heaven and from other species or kinds of beings upon earth; a something that makes you to be what you are, namely, human beings. This something we call "human nature."

I can see further that this human nature is complete in each individual. Thus you do not attribute your actions to another, or to the race in general, but you attribute them to yourself. You say of these acts, whether you performed them to-day or

ten or twenty or more years ago, "I did them." You feel and realize that they belong to you individually. Now this condition in which a being is responsible for his acts, whether they be moral or physical or intellectual, is called "personality." In the human being, nature and personality are one.

Again, if I consider this human nature, I find that it is two-fold: it is partly spiritual and partly material; it is composed of body and soul. All actions, however, whether they spring principally from the soul or from the body, are attributed neither to the one nor to the other alone, but to both combined, forming the one responsible person. Thus, though it is the body that eats, you say, "I eat." Thus, though it is the soul that thinks, you say, "I think." Now this union of soul and body in man has been used as an illustration — for there is a likeness — of the union of man and God in Jesus Christ. The Athanasian Creed puts it thus: "As the rational soul and the flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ." In the incarnate Christ there exist two natures, that of God and that of man, united in One Person, and since that Person is divine, all His actions are of a divine character. This Person was always God, existing throughout eternity, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. In time He became man for the glory of God and the redemption of mankind.

Summing up this, the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation, it can be seen that there are contained in it substantially four distinct ideas. First, Jesus Christ is very God, equal to God the Father and God the Holy Ghost, possessed of all the divine attributes, power, and majesty. Secondly, Jesus Christ is man, having a body and soul like ours, endowed with all human faculties. Thirdly, while Jesus Christ is both God and man, God from eternity, made man in time, yet He is but one Person, one individual Being, and that Person is divine. Fourthly, the manhood possessed by Christ, though it is really assumed into the Divine Person, still remains entirely human, so that in respect of His manhood Christ is of one substance with us. Words could not more clearly state this doctrine than the definition used in the Athanasian Creed: "The right faith is that we believe and confess that Our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, is both

God and man. He is God from the substance of the Father, begotten before all ages; and man from the substance of His mother, born in time; perfect God, perfect man, subsisting of a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father according to His Godhead; less than the Father according to His manhood; who though He be both God and man, nevertheless is not two but the one Christ; one, not by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh but by the taking of manhood unto God; one altogether, not by the confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the rational soul and the flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ."

Such the doctrine of the Incarnation which the Catholic Church has steadfastly proclaimed and unflinchingly defended. Its very existence through the many centuries of human change and against numerous attacks stamps it with the seal of truth. For it is as much beyond man's invention as the sun is beyond the eagle that soars into its light. That He who is God, who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," should "empty himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men," could have been conceived only in the Divine Mind, as it could have been accomplished only by the Divine Will. To my mind, one of the greatest proofs of its truth is to be found in the benefit that has accrued to mankind from its acceptance during the past nineteen centuries. We who live with centuries of Christian civilization behind us can scarcely appreciate at first glance the change that has been wrought in the world. Could we, however, but conjure up the vision of past paganism with its terrible immorality and degradation, so low that we wonder that man even without grace could descend to it, and contrast this state of things with the civilization of to-day, even with its spots of leprosy, we would realize that only a fact which is divine could have brought about the change. Whether men acknowledge it or not, the nobler realities of our present civilization, the higher moral standards by which men are judged to-day, testify to the coming of the Son of God upon the earth as man.

III. The fact of the Incarnation is borne witness to in the Sacred Scriptures. Because at various times in the history of Christianity opponents have attacked this doctrine in one point

or another, the Church has defined and declared exactly its meaning; but all of her decisions have been based upon the teaching of the Apostles. In all her declarations she has ever preserved that which shows the great beauty and glory of the mystery, namely, the perfect union of God and man.

If with Arius of old some deny that Christ was truly God, assigning to Him the place as it were of a demigod, making of Him the most perfect of all creatures, but still allowing Him to be only a creature, the Church summons the witnesses of apostolic days to proclaim the truth. She calls upon the greatest defender of Christ's divinity, St. John, and he bears testimony, for he says that the Word, who is Jesus Christ, "was with God, and the Word was God." In his Apocalypse, that revelation vouchsafed especially to him, he pictures Christ as the Lamb receiving the worship that is given to God: "To him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction, and honor, and glory, and power, for ever and ever" (Apoc. v. 13).

She appeals to St. Paul, who staked all upon his belief in Christ's divinity, and he gives testimony of his faith in the Godhead of Christ when he states that He who is the Redeemer is He "who is over all things, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5), and when he proclaims that Jesus Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6).

She calls upon the apostolic writers in general, and to those who read the New Testament with open eyes and unprejudiced mind; it is evident that these pioneers of Christianity are agreed in identifying Christ with the Lord of all things, with the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

Or if some, admitting that Christ is God, on the other hand deny to Him true human nature either in its entirety or in part, the Church is just as jealous in guarding this side of the truth, again appealing to the teaching of Christ's chosen messengers. Thus, when she condemned the teaching that declared there was in Christ no human soul such as that which exists in man, when she declared false the assertion that the human nature was lost and swallowed up in the divine, and when again she inveighed against the opinion of the Monothelites, who would curtail the human faculties of Christ, she invented no new doctrine but

simply reiterated the first teaching of Christianity. She cites the evangelists, who continually insist upon the humanity of Christ in the complete sense of that word; who depict the Saviour as a man who knew with a human mind, who obeyed and served with a human will, who prayed with a human soul. She cites St. John, who without equivocation or reserve says that "the Word was made flesh"; who asserts that Jesus Christ "is come in the flesh" (2 John 7). She cites St. Paul, who says that the Son of God "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7). Or again, she cites St. Peter, who speaks of Christ's human spirit side by side with His human body (1 Pet. iii. 18). Indeed, in all the New Testament there is nothing clearer than Christ's true and complete humanity, and as a matter of fact, however many have assailed the divinity of the Saviour, few, especially in later days, have questioned His humanity.

The whole life of Jesus Christ, from Bethlehem to Calvary, is replete with proofs that show forth the double, yet single, truth of the Godhead and manhood united in one person. Enter the stable at Bethlehem and you behold, lying upon the straw, an infant, born of woman, a man like unto all men; but you behold also a God whose coming the angels announce and who receives the adoration of the shepherds and the kings of the East. Gather with those who witness the baptism of the Saviour in the Jordan, and you behold a man, one who has taken to Himself the likeness of sin; but you behold also a God for whom the heavens are opened, upon whom the Holy Spirit descends, and of whom the Father says, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." Go with Him out into the desert, and you will witness a man who hungers and thirsts; but you will witness also a God who is ministered unto by angels. Journey with Him throughout Judea and you will see a man who lives as other men, who, in fact, lives a life of poverty, who grows weary under his burdens, who is despised, hated, and pursued by some, even unto death; but you will see also a God who cures the sick, and of His own power raises the dead to life. In the garden of Gethsemane you behold the man stricken to earth in an agony of blood, saddened, sorrowful even unto death; but you also behold the God whose voice alone strikes back His captors and

whose word cures the wounded soldier. Upon the cross you behold the man, who is terribly tortured, who suffers the woeful agony of thirst, who is deserted and left desolate; but you also behold the God, with whose suffering nature itself sympathizes, and who, on the third day, is to rise from the dead, giving thus the greatest proof of His divinity.

To us this mystery has a wonderful meaning. That God should redeem man at all, that He should make atonement for the sins of mankind, is an evidence of infinite mercy. But that God should have chosen this special way, the Incarnation of His Divine Son, is an evidence of His stupendous love for the creature of His hand. It is the answer of heaven to the cravings, the longings of man, an answer to be conceived only in the Divine Mind. Religion, in its very essence, implies a loving creature and a loving God; and the history of man's spiritual life has been a series of cravings and a series of answers.

In the offerings of Cain, when he placed before the Lord the fruits of the field, or of Abel, when he presented the firstlings of his flock; in the ritual observances of the chosen people, in the blood of sacrifice, in the victim of the holocaust; in the glories of the temple of Solomon; in the lowly catacombs of Christianity's dawn, in the medieval miracles of stone; in the rude worship of the uncouth barbarian and the humble offering of the untutored savage; in the monumental tributes erected by Greece and Rome to their pagan deities; in Egypt's enduring walls of Thebes and Karnak, — in all these we detect the great desire of man and look upon the silent witnesses to the everlasting craving of man's heart for God.

And God has come to man in many and in various ways: not only in the ordinary and usual visitations of His grace to individual souls, in the inspirations and spiritual evidences of His presence, but also in extraordinary and, we might say, physical manifestations. Read in the word of God of the many such favors granted to man, and we must exclaim, "Truly, God is Love." Behold how in some palpable and real way, though it is not given us to understand, God walked in the garden of His created paradise and spoke with man. Again, learn of the great vision of God with which Jacob was favored at Bethel and how

the heavens were opened to Abraham and Moses in the apparitions of God that were accorded them, and we must say, "God is Love." Or yet again, learn how in the desert journeyings of the Israelites God was present always in a visible manner, by day in the form of a cloud and in a pillar of fire by night; learn how when Solomon's temple, in all its beauty, was dedicated to God's honor, the glory of the Lord, the visible symbol of His abiding presence, filled all the sanctuary, and we must say, "God is Love."

All these, however, grand and sublime though they be, fade away before the light and splendor of His latest coming: all these evidences of God's love and desire for man are obscured by the glory of that mighty love that shines forth in the Incarnation. Prostrate before the God made man, with a knowledge that was not accorded of old, with a devotion to which even the patriarchs and prophets were strangers, with a sympathy that strikes a note of sweetest friendship, with an affection that transcends all other tributes of man, we can now exclaim with the highest and sublimest meaning: "God is Love."

However little we may understand of the deep mystery of the Incarnation, this at least we can grasp, that it is an expression of God's desire to be with man and the recognition of man's desire to be with God. God so loved the world as to send His only begotton Son. He came not to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him. He came that all may have life, and have it more abundantly. The promise spoken by God in the beginning of the human race is now fulfilled; the fact proclaimed by the lips of the ancient seer: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son," is now accomplished; the prophecy uttered of old is now, in the truest and strictest sense, fully realized, and God is become our God with us, our Emmanuel.

In His Incarnation, Christ likewise reveals the true dignity of man. He comes in human flesh. Lowly indeed is His condition, but even in that there shines forth the more the glory of His love and man's true greatness. In the Incarnation and in it alone we can conceive man's high estate. This glorious mystery is the only title of nobility that mankind can claim. Without it we could scarcely have any faith in man's destiny of goodness

and happiness: without it the dread veil of sin and crime would obscure the essential beauty of the soul; but with it, we are enabled, through the power of God's revelation, to divest man of the garb of wretchedness, to unclothe the meanest and the lowest of the vesture of crime and guilt, and to behold, emerging from its habitation of sin, a soul made for eternal life with God.

And in all this revelation that comes to us in the Incarnate Christ, there is established in our hearts the desire, and in our wills the power, to live ever a purer and holier existence, until not only putting aside sin, but also putting on the beauty of ever-increasing goodness, we shall become in truth children of the Most High.

The Third Article of the Creed

BY THE REV. P. HEHEL, S.J.

Of all the mysteries of our Holy Catholic faith there is none which has caused more dissension, more error, schism, and heresy, than the one contained in the third article of the Apostolic Creed. The cause of it I wish to explain to you to-day. Indeed, we cannot be surprised at it when we ponder over the fact that the conception and birth of Christ are as far above the works of mankind as they are beyond all human understanding, so that they require a strong, living, and firm faith by virtue of which man believes what he can neither see nor comprehend.

Therefore, I ask you when you now listen to the explanation of this third article of the creed to have recourse to your faith and expect of me no other proof than what the words of the article itself offer. Understand then:

I. *The proper sense of words.*
II. *What according to these words we must believe.*
III. *How our way of life should correspond with this faith.*

I. When we make our profession of faith with the words: "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Begotten Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," we give testimony to our belief in the only begotten Son of God, but in none other than the One who was conceived by the Holy

Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. We declare our belief in Him as God and man. God from all eternity and man in time. We also testify that we believe in that Christ who alone was conceived by the Holy Ghost without the aid of man, and whose conception did in no way destroy the virginity of Mary. For though she was a mother, because she had given Him birth, yet she remained a virgin before, during, and after His birth, because she had conceived Him by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost without the co-operation of man. This is the sense of the words of this third article: "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

II. According to these words we, as Catholics, must believe and profess: 1. That Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was at the same time true God and true man; that in accordance with His nature and being He was the Second Person of the Godhead from all eternity, that in time He assumed human nature and united it inseparably with His Godhead. Although He now had two natures, the divine and the human, yet He remained the same person, namely, the Second Person of the Godhead. 2. We must believe and profess that Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Godhead, was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, like any other child in the womb of its mother, but not in the same common, human, natural manner, but by the supernatural, the overshadowing power of the Holy Ghost. For thus spoke the Angel Gabriel to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the holy child which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." This was confirmed by the Angel of the Lord when he appeared before St. Joseph and bore testimony to the virginal purity of Mary: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." The teaching of heretics that Christ was born through the co-operation of St. Joseph is therefore false. The teachings of those who held that Christ had brought His mortal body with Him from heaven is equally erroneous, as is the teaching of others who said that Christ had only an apparent body, not a real one formed from the flesh and blood of Mary, for this is con-

trary to the distinct expression of St. John: "And the Word was made flesh."

But how was it possible for Christ to take flesh through the overshadowing and co-operation of the Holy Ghost, who is Himself fleshless and a pure spirit? This no human being can comprehend. For this reason I told you that in this article we must be guided much more by faith than by human insight and understanding. Nevertheless, we can make this question clearer to ourselves by a comparison. We all know that our soil will not bring forth fruit unless it has previously been cultivated, plowed, and sown, and yet it is certain that at the creation of the world the first sheaf grew out of the soil solely by the wish of God, man having had no part in its existence and growth. So, too, did Mary bring forth the blessed fruit of her womb without co-operation of man. It was the Holy Ghost alone who, by His almighty power, formed a body from the pure flesh and blood of the Virgin, with which at the same moment the Second Person of the Godhead united Himself. And thus was Jesus who was God from eternity conceived as man and became flesh in the womb of Mary.

III. Out of all this arise important precepts which we must follow if our life and conduct are to reflect the profession of our faith. For behold! How immeasurably great God's love was toward man that He permitted His only Son to descend from heaven and become man, solely for our sake and our salvation. Think of it! As far as impotent, mortal, sinful man stands beneath God, so far has God humbled Himself for the sake of man: the Master for the sake of His servant; the Creator for the sake of the creature; the Judge for the sake of the poor sinner; God for the sake of man! Is there any human love which can be compared with this? You love your friend, your husband, your wife, your relatives, as you say, from the bottom of your heart; but why? Because they wish you well, they love you, they serve you, and because you have evidences of their good will. What does this mean? It means that you merely love yourself and seek but your own comfort and advantage. But what could God expect from man? He was God from eternity. Before man breathed He was all blessedness, had everything by

Himself and through Himself, as the origin of everything good. Therefore by His love He did not seek His own but your salvation and bliss. Oh, Christian, if you would only believe this, or rather ponder over it thoroughly; if you would think seriously of what your faith teaches you, how could you be so ungrateful as to prove yourself an enemy to this infinitely loving God?

Secondly, you can learn from this that Christ became man and walked upon this earth in weak and mortal flesh, to show us by His example how we, the faithful children of God, His disciples and heirs of His kingdom, should live and act. He was meek, mild, and patient, poor and obedient unto His dying day. Oh, how pride, vengeance, avarice, envy, and wickedness despoil a Christian! And how many Christians are there who do not commit one or the other of these sins!

We learn finally that because Christ was born of Mary the Virgin she is really His mother, and consequently can obtain from God all that ever any mother could obtain from her son. If, then, you implicitly believe this, O Christian, take refuge with Mary in all your necessities. Honor her as the mother of the Most High; invoke her as the most powerful of women, who exercises a motherly right over the God-man, her Son. Pray to her, the clement, the mild, the benignant, that she may obtain for you the grace of living here true to your faith, and of beholding hereafter the blessed fruit of her womb, Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Saviour.

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SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

SUBJECT

LESSONS OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

TEXT

This child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel.—LUKE ii. 34.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. The Gospel of to-day commemorates the presentation of our Lord in the Temple forty days after His Nativity. There were praying in the Temple at the time holy old Simeon and Anna. The former, receiving the Child in his arms and being filled with the Holy Ghost, first blessed God for having been spared to behold the Saviour, and then prophesied that through this child many should correspond with grace and be saved, while many others through their own fault would be lost.

I. **"This child."** These words show how God in this mystery condescended to man: 1. He whom the angels adore came to minister to man: "the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister" (Mark x. 45). 2. He at whose nod the heavens tremble (Job xxvi. 11) was born on earth as a weak infant. 3. He who possessed the riches of the celestial Kingdom became poor for our sakes: "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant," etc. (Phil. ii. 6).

II. **"For the resurrection."** God condescended to our lowliness in order to redeem us from sin and to raise us to the highest degree of dignity: 1. Our Lord passed over the nature of the Angels and took the nature of man: "for nowhere doth he take hold of the angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold" (Heb. ii. 16); "to which of the angels hath he said at any time,

thou art my son," etc. (Heb. i. 5). It is the greatest glory of our race that the Son of God is now bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. 2. The birth of Christ ennobles the humblest circumstances of our lives, — poverty, weakness, suffering, etc. 3. Christ, by the poverty, privations, and obscurity of His birth, teaches us the dangers of riches, pleasures, and honors: "all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes," etc. (1 John i. 16). 4. Christ is born to us in order to communicate to us the gifts of grace and glory.

III. **"For the fall."** Although intended for the benefit of all, the blessings of our Lord's nativity will rise in judgment against many through their own fault: "Though He died for all, yet not all receive the benefit of His death" (Conc. of Trent, Sess. VI. cap. 3). "The blood of thy Lord is given for thee, if thou wilt; if thou wilt not, it is not given for thee" (St. Aug.). 1. Contrast the shepherds, Simeon and Anna, who received Christ, with the inhospitable people of Bethlehem, who denied Him a dwelling. 2. Mankind may be divided into two classes: those who are for Christ, and those who are against Him.

Conclusion. In order that our Lord's nativity may be for each one of us not a stumbling-block and cause of fall, but the cause of resurrection unto spiritual life and joy everlasting, we must at all times aspire to that Adoption of Sons spoken of in to-day's Epistle. Let us ever faithfully adhere to the teaching of Christ and keep our souls free from mortal sin.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article III of the Creed

The lessons which the mysteries of the Incarnation and Nativity convey

The pastor should labor to impress deeply on the minds and hearts of the faithful these mysteries, "which were written for our learning";[1] first, that by the commemoration of so great

[1] Rom. xv. 4.

a benefit they may make some return of gratitude to God, its author; and next, in order to place before their eyes, as a model for imitation, this striking and singular example of humility.

THE DIVINE CONDESCENSION

What can be more useful, what better calculated to subdue the pride and haughtiness of the human heart, than to reflect, frequently, that God humbles Himself in such a manner as to assume our frailty and weakness, in order to communicate to us his grace and glory — that God becomes man, and that He "at whose nod," to use the words of Scripture, "the pillars of heaven tremble," [1] bows His supreme and infinite majesty to minister to man — that He whom the angels adore in heaven is born on earth! When such is the goodness of God towards us, what, I ask, what should we not do to testify our obedience to His will? With what promptitude and alacrity should we not love, embrace, and perform all the duties of Christian humility?

The faithful should also know the salutary lessons which Christ teaches at His birth, before He opens His divine lips, — He is born in poverty; He is born a stranger under a roof not His own; He is born in a lonely crib; He is born in the depth of winter! These circumstances, which attend the birth of the man-God, are thus recorded by St. Luke: "And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." [2] Could the Evangelist comprehend under more humble terms the majesty and glory that filled the heavens and the earth? He does not say, there was no room in the inn, but there was no room for *Him* who says, "the world is mine, and the fulness thereof"; [3] and this destitution of the man-God another Evangelist records in these words: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." [4]

THE DIGNITY WHICH IT CONFERS ON MAN

When the faithful have placed these things before their eyes, let them also reflect that God condescended to assume the low-

[1] Job xxvi. 11. [2] Luke ii. 6, 7. [3] Ps. xlix. 12. [4] John i. 11.

liness and frailty of our flesh in order to exalt man to the highest degree of dignity. This single reflection alone supplies sufficient proof of the exalted dignity of man conferred on him by the divine bounty — that He who is true and perfect God vouchsafed to become man; so that we may now glory that the Son of God is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, a privilege not given to angels, "for nowhere," says the apostle, "doth he take hold of the angels: but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold."[1]

THE INFLUENCE WHICH IT SHOULD HAVE ON MAN'S LIFE

We must also take care that these singular blessings rise not in judgment against us. At Bethlehem, the place of His nativity, He was denied a dwelling. Now that He is no longer born in human flesh, let Him not be denied a dwelling in our hearts, in which He may be spiritually born, for through an earnest desire for our salvation, this is the object of His most anxious solicitude.

As, then, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and in a manner superior to the order of nature, He was made man and was born, was holy and even holiness itself, so does it become our duty to be born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, . . . but of God";[2] to walk as new creatures in newness of spirit,[3] and to preserve that holiness and purity of soul that become men regenerated by the Spirit of God.[4] Thus shall we reflect some faint image of the holy conception and nativity of the Son of God, which are the objects of our firm faith, and believing which we revere and adore in a mystery, a wisdom of God which was hidden.[5]

Sermons

Contradiction of Christ

BY THE REV. FERDINAND HECKMANN, O.F.M.

Simeon in to-day's Gospel tells us that Jesus Christ "is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted." What is the reason of this seemingly strange prophecy? With the entrance of Jesus Christ into this world the judgment of this world began, the separation

[1] Heb. ii. 16. [2] John i. 13. [3] Rom. vi. 4–7.
[4] 2 Cor. iii. 18. [5] 1 Cor. ii. 7.

of men into the two opposite camps of the adherents and of the adversaries of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ "is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many, and for a sign which shall be contradicted," because He is the conspicuous exponent of truths and principles which attract to His standard those who believe in Him and follow Him, and which make Him the point of attack of those who do not believe in Him, who oppose and contradict Him. He is the sign around which assemble the hosts of His followers and against which are arrayed the hordes of His adversaries. In all the ages of Christianity the name of Jesus Christ has been the symbol that divided the civilized world into the two great divisions of those who were with Him and of those who were against Him. For the prophesied contradiction of Christ is by no means limited to the Jews, but embraces the whole human race from the birth of Christ till the end of time when the words of Simeon will find their last realization in the great separation of mankind on the day of the last Judgment.

Let us then consider that the world in its views, tendencies, and pursuits contradicts Christ.

"Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world," says St. John the Evangelist. "If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John ii. 15, 16). These capital vices of sensuality, avarice, and pride are the source of all temptation and sin and therefore of all the opposition to and contradiction of Christ in this world.

I. Christ is born amid suffering and in order to suffer; the world hates self-denial, suffering, and mortification. St. Bernard invites us to go with him to Bethlehem and, pointing out to us the shivering form of the Divine Babe, he exclaims: "Behold, where He is born, when He is born, and how He is born into this world and you will see the way to life this Divine Guide points out to us, you will know the truths which He teaches us, and you will learn the combats to which He leads us." Hardly has the Divine Child made its entrance into this world and suf-

ferings overwhelm it to such a degree that we can easily foresee what the course and end of its life will be.

Say against this what you will, you who detest the word "suffering" itself, who endeavor to satisfy your sensuality in every way possible, who pamper your body and fulfil its lusts; you who consider a life of comfort, of pleasure and leisure, the acme of human happiness—say what you will, your sensuality and effeminacy in the presence of the Divine Child must suffuse your face with shame and confusion. For it teaches you by word and example that mortification, self-denial, and suffering are not such an evil, nor a life of ease and pleasure such a blessing as the world would make you believe. The satisfaction of the senses is dangerous and their mortification is salutary, for the Word Incarnate chose the latter and condemned the former.

Self-denial, suffering, and mortification are necessary for us, but they were not necessary for Jesus Christ. They are necessary for us in order to subdue our passions, to satisfy for our sins, to acquire virtues and to gain merits. How ashamed we should feel ourselves before Him when we shrink from undergoing suffering for His sake, when we fret and complain about it.

If Christ, then, is not to be a sign which our mind and life contradict, we must fall down before the crib and ask His pardon for our cowardice and effeminacy in regard to the mortifications and sufferings which a good Christian life necessarily entails; that we prefer our ease and comfort to the fulfilment of our duties toward God and our neighbor; that we refuse to carry our cross patiently and in a penitential spirit, and will not hear of voluntary penance. Then let us ask Him for the grace of patience and repentance so necessary for our salvation.

II. Christ is born in poverty because the world is full of avarice. He came into this world to proclaim a new Gospel, to announce to men a doctrine which is directly opposed to their avarice. How wonderful is the harmony between the Gospel and the crib. The poor crib, the miserable stable, the poor swaddling clothes cry out to us, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 3). But the word says, "Blessed are they who possess the riches of this world." Christ says in the Gospel: "Lay not up to yourselves

treasures on earth: where the rust, and moth consume, and where thieves break through, and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal" (Matt. vi. 19, 20). Does not the manger proclaim the same truth? For what forced Christ to be born in the most abject poverty? Nothing else than His own choice. He was born of the royal family of David, but at a time when it had fallen into the deepest obscurity and poverty. He was born in the royal city of Bethlehem, but in this city there was not place low enough for Him to make His entrance into the world. He chose for His birth the most despicable dwelling, an abode of animals.

"You know," says St. Paul, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich he became poor, for your sakes; that through his poverty you might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9). Why did Christ become so extremely poor? In order to put to shame the avarice of men and to atone for it. A bitter remedy for a dangerous and deeply rooted evil. How much disorder, care, trouble, sin, and misery does not "the concupiscence of the eyes" cause among men, and even among Christians! He who does not possess the things of this world longs for them in order to free himself from the distress of poverty, and with their attainment avarice generally increases. What cares, anxiety, and labors do men not often endure in order to preserve and increase their possessions, losing sight, in the mean time, altogether of the things of Heaven! They do not consider that they cover their souls with a multitude of sins about which they care the less the more frequently and generally these sins are committed. How many lawsuits, long-enduring discords, envies and jealousies and intrigues, does not the love of money cause! "Nothing is more wicked than the covetous man," says the Wise Man. "There is not a more wicked thing than to love money: for such a one setteth even his own soul for sale" (Eccles. x. 9, 10). "They that will become rich," says St. Paul, "fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition. For the desire of money is the root of all evils" (1 Tim. vi. 9–10).

III. Christ is born in lowliness and abjection in order to put to shame and to atone for the pride of men. "Who being in the form of God," says St. Paul, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 6–8). So deep is the lowering of God's majesty in Christ Jesus that the world cannot comprehend it, and therefore Christ crucified is "unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 23). "But," says St. Bernard, "He spurned the palaces of kings and chose a stable in order to condemn the vainglory of this world and its vanity." According to the doctrine of the world it is mere foolishness not to strive for honors, power, and glory.

In order, then, that our life be not a contradiction of Christ's life and teaching, we must necessarily avoid all vainglory and contentions for honors and preferments, all arrogance and sensitiveness. "Unless you be converted, and become [humble] as little children," He says to us from the crib, "you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3). Either we must humble ourselves in this world according to the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, or we must despair of becoming like to Him in the Kingdom of His glory; for God hath exalted Him because He humbled Himself in poverty, weakness, subjection, contempt, and persecution. There is no other choice left to us, if we want to be true followers of Christ and attain His promises, than to keep what we have promised in Baptism, namely, to renounce Satan and all his vices, his pride and vainglory.

The world must either conform itself to the truths and principles of Jesus Christ, or Jesus Christ must accommodate Himself to the maxims and principles of this world. But the latter is impossible, for "Jesus Christ, yesterday, and to-day; and the same for ever." Therefore, if we do not wish to contradict Christ in our life, we cannot make it conformable to the principles of this world, but must shape our life according to the truths and principles which He has taught us by word and example. He says: "I am the way," because "no man cometh to

the Father, but by me." The way of Christ is one of self-denial and mortification, of humility and poverty, at least in spirit. He also says that He is "the truth." This personified truth, however, teaches us contempt of self, contempt of the world, of its pride, riches, and pleasures. Christ again says that He is "the life." But He led a life of self-denial and suffering, of poverty and humility. A life, therefore, spent in the pursuit of riches, honors, and pleasures is a life leading to death and perdition. To contradict Christ in our mind or in our life is to draw damnation upon ourselves; for He says of Himself: "Whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder" (Matt. xxi. 44). But if we make our life in this world conformable to His words and example, we shall also be conformed to Him in the world without end. Amen.

The Incarnation — Befitting

BY THE REV. P. HEHEL, S.J.

One prophet after another was sent to Jerusalem, yet they were mocked, stoned, and put to death. At last the greatest of all prophets came and preached His saving doctrine in the temple at Jerusalem; still even He was not recognized as the Messiah and Saviour of the world. Oh, lamentable blindness! The Redeemer stands at the doors, and they are not opened to Him! He walks through the streets of the city approaching destruction, and Jerusalem will not be saved! The hour of suffering is at hand, but all His pains and sufferings will be lost for the sick Jerusalem — it knew Him not! Is it surprising that the most loving Heart which ever beat burst into a storm of tears?

Dear Christians! From this darkness of mind in which Jerusalem walked we have extricated ourselves by the illumination of Christianity. God has spoken to us, and taught by His word. We say to Christ with Peter, "Thou art the Son of God." This truth is confirmed by the Holy Ghost, who, speaking by St. John, says, "The Word was made flesh." This truth is attested by the miracles of Christ, for He performed miracles which no man could do of himself, and He proved thereby that He was not

only man but that at the same time He was God Almighty. This is also attested by thousands and thousands of martyrs who have shed their blood for this truth. This it is which was declared by all the Prophets, and all the prophecies, which have been preserved in reference to the Messias. For in Christ Jesus they were all fulfilled. He was born in time as Jacob and Daniel prophesied. He was conceived of a Virgin as Isaias prophesied. He was born in Bethlehem of Juda as Micheas foretold. He made His entry into Jerusalem seated upon a colt as Zacharias prophesied. He let Himself be led to the slaughter like a meek lamb, rose again from out the grave, and triumphed over death and corruption as the Psalmist prophesied (Ps. xv. 10).

Therefore this Christ is the true Messias, the anointed of the Lord, our Emmanuel, God clothed with our humanity. For this reason no orthodox Christian doubts for a moment that Christ, the Divine Word, became really man. But many might ponder and doubt because on the one hand of the Majesty of this Divine Word, and on the other hand of the misery of our human nature, whether it was befitting that the Divine Word should take human nature.

I will solve this difficulty in to-day's instruction by showing from the exalted pre-eminence of the union of the Divine Word with human nature that the Incarnation (1) in respect to the (assumed) human nature and (2) on the part of God was befitting. From this you learn to know this great mystery better.

1. Whoever looks upon the work of the Incarnation with earthly eyes, may deem it unbefitting that the Son of God should have united Himself to a mortal nature, so infinitely far from God, and to a body formed of flesh. But we should never measure these extraordinary actions of God by the standard of earthly wisdom, nor determine their dignity according to the cold calculations of human reason. Faith alone gives us the right standard thereto. But it teaches us that the humanity of Christ was in nowise subject to those failings and imperfections with which our nature is so abundantly burdened. And although His humanity in His natural qualities had all that we men have according to our nature, still it was gifted with such prerogatives that it was exalted above all creatures. The flesh of Christ's human-

ity was in a miraculous manner formed from the purest blood of a Virgin without spot, by the power of the Holy Ghost and received thereby a purity which surpasses all human ideas. With this flesh God united a soul full of inexpressible beauty, full of grace, full of the knowledge of the most exalted virtues, so that it shone brighter in this new garment than the sun in its splendor. As a garment of plain cloth does not seem suitable for a monarch, but when ornamented with gold, pearls and precious stones is considered fit for a king's robe; so also did this perishable frail humanity, after God had adorned it in the womb of a Virgin with such glorious gifts, appear so beautiful in the sight of the Divine Word, that He did not hesitate as King of Glory to clothe Himself with it. The prophet David in spirit foresaw the Son of God arrayed in this beautiful garment, and carried away with admiration, the royal singer sang "O Lord my God, thou art exceedingly great, thou hast put on praise and beauty: and art clothed with light as with a garment" (Ps. ciii. 1). "The Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded himself" (Ps. xcii. 1).

2. And why should it not be befitting that God should show His glory, His power, His wisdom, His goodness? Now all these He has revealed most perfectly in the mystery of the Incarnation.

The way and manner of the union exalts the honor and glory of God. For it extends on the one hand to the Divine Word, that is to the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, even to the Divine nature itself. Hence theologians, in speaking of this mystery, say that the Divine nature was united to human nature, and the Divinity to humanity. On the other hand this union extends to the human nature which is made up of body and soul, flesh and blood, and the individual members of the body. It extends also to the soul, as to the superior part of man without which he could not live. The soul of man was corrupted in its original powers by sin. The Son of God, who came to heal everything that was corrupted, united Himself there with a reasonable soul so as to be able to practise through it all those interior operations of love and worship of God by which he was to redeem man. But as human nature consists of soul and body, of spirit and flesh, therefore the Divine Word united Himself also with body and flesh. And

for this reason this mystery is so appropriately named the "Incarnation."

For "the word was made flesh" (John i. 14). Still this union not only extended to the body of mankind but also to the blood. "In Christ," says St. Cyril, "the Word united Himself to the blood, as well as to the body and soul." And the Apostle St. Paul confirms this with the words "Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself — Christ — in like manner partook of the same" (Heb. ii. 14). Hence it is that this blood has the power to cleanse the world from their sins, and that we adore this precious blood in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, because like the body of Christ it is united to the Divine Person. O infinitely exalted union! How Thy sublimity presses us into the dust, so as in the dust to honor and glorify the Godhead!

But in this union He has also shown His power, wisdom, and goodness. For what can be more powerful than to unite most intimately with one another objects which are farther apart than heaven and earth? What can be wiser than for the Redeemer of the world to unite the first with the last to connect the Divine Word as the beginning of all things with mankind who, in the creation of the world, was the last? What can be more good or kind than that the Creator Himself should communicate Himself to His creatures and be united with them? His goodness is great because by His presence He communicates Himself to all creatures. His goodness is greater because He unites Himself with the just by His grace. But this is the greatest measure of goodness that He has united Himself to human nature in one Person.

3. Through this union everything that the world had lost has been regained. A stream of boundless graces is opened to it, sinful concupiscence is lessened, the glory of God promoted, His honor increased, His name extended, His enemies brought to shame, the whole of nature renewed and placed in a better condition. For "In Christ," writes the Apostle St. Paul, "God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. In the dispensation of the fulness of times, to establish all things in Christ, which are in heaven and on earth" (Eph. i. 3 and 10). O dear brethren! What blessings have flowed upon us through

this union! To what an exalted plane has not the Son of God lifted up mankind disgraced by sin? How gloriously adorned does this image appear again which God made according to His likeness, and which the evil spirit had deformed so frightfully? Therefore we ought as often as we reflect upon this union of God with humanity, or when we utter it with our lips, to thank God, and if not the whole body, at least bow our head, because He has vouchsafed to take our body and become flesh! Behold the Church in her servants. As often as the priest repeats the words in Holy Mass, "The Word was made flesh," he falls upon his knees; as often as the words *et incarnatus est* are sung by the choir at High Mass, every one bows reverently. And what do you do when you hear the bell ring for the "Angelus," and you are invited to remember with gratitude the great and ever adorable mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ? The Church reminds us three times during the day of this unspeakable blessing and how often do we really think about it? You ought to fall upon your knees thrice during the day at the words "And the Word was made flesh," and praise the boundless love of your God! But what do you do? Alas! you seldom think about it, especially in the hour of temptation! God took our flesh, He became our brother in the flesh — and you do not fear to sin against your flesh! You have become related by blood to the second Person of the most adorable Trinity and dishonor your body! What a responsibility! Ponder this well, and keep your body holy!

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FEAST OF CIRCUMCISION

SUBJECT

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

TEXT

His name was called Jesus, which was called by the angel, before he was conceived in the womb. — LUKE ii. 21.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. In the Old Law (Gen. xvii. 12) it was required that every male child should on the eighth day after his birth be circumcised, and thus admitted among God's chosen people. The rite of circumcision in the Old Law corresponded to the Sacrament of Baptism in the New Law and was the means of remitting original sin. Our Lord, although free from every sin, submitted to this rite in order to show that He was a true Son of Abraham, to manifest respect and obedience to the established law, and to prove that He had a real human body. At the time of circumcision a name was given to the child. Our Lord was called Jesus, which signified His office as Saviour. On this feast of the Circumcision, therefore, it is most appropriate that we should meditate on the first petition of the Lord's prayer, "hallowed be thy name."

I. **The first petition of the Lord's Prayer.** 1. In the opening words of the Lord's Prayer we ask that God's name may be honored, which shows that God's glory should be our chief desire. 2. This petition does not mean that God's essential glory or perfection should be increased, nor that the honor given Him on earth should be equal to that shown Him in heaven.

II. **The objects of this petition.** We ask: 1. That we may praise God with our hearts and lips; 2. That those in error may be brought to recognize and revere His Church; 3. That sinners

may be converted to His service; 4. That men may learn to refer all blessings to Him as to their author and source.

Conclusion. Our conduct should be in conformity with this petition. 1. Catholics must not cause the name of God or of His Church to be profaned by their own evil words and actions. 2. On the contrary, by clean speech and good example, Catholics ought to excite others to exalt the name of God, to respect the faith of Christ, and to honor His Church. 3. Good resolutions for the New Year.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part IV

Hallowed be Thy Name

OBJECTS AND ORDER OF OUR PRAYERS

What should be the objects and the order of our prayers we learn from the Lord and Master of all; for as prayer is the envoy and interpreter of our wishes and desires, we then pray as we ought when the order of our prayers corresponds with that of their objects.

True charity admonishes us to love God with our whole heart and soul, for as He alone is the supreme good, He justly commands our particular and especial love; and this love we cannot cherish towards Him unless we prefer His honor and glory to all created things. Whatever good we or others enjoy, whatever good man can name, is inferior to God, because emanating from Him who is the supreme good.

In order, therefore, that our prayers may proceed in due order, our divine Redeemer has placed this petition, which regards our chief good, at the head of the others, thus teaching us that before we pray for anything for our neighbor or ourselves, we should pray for those things which appertain to the glory of God, and make known to Him our wishes and desires for their accomplishment. Thus shall we remain in charity, which teaches us to love God more than ourselves, and to make those things which we desire for the sake of God the first, and what we desire for ourselves the next, object of our prayers.

OBJECT OF THIS PETITION AS IT REGARDS GOD

But as desires and petitions regard things which we lack, and as God, that is to say His divine nature, can receive no accession, nor can the Divinity adorned after an ineffable manner with all perfections admit of increase, the faithful are to understand that what we pray for to God regarding Himself belongs not to His intrinsic perfections, but to His external glory. We desire and pray that His name may be better known to the nations; that His kingdom may be extended; and that the number of His faithful servants may be every day increased, — three things, His name, His kingdom, and the number of His faithful servants, which regard not His essence, but His extrinsic glory.

WHAT WE SOLICIT IN THIS PETITION: FIRST

When we pray that the name of God may be hallowed, we mean that the sanctity and glory of His name may be increased; and here the pastor will inform his pious hearers that our Lord does not teach us to pray that it be hallowed on earth as it is in heaven, that is, in the same manner and with the same perfection, for this is impossible; but that it be hallowed through love, and from the inmost affection of the soul.

True, in itself His name requires not to be hallowed. "It is terrible and holy,"[1] even as He Himself is holy; nothing can be added to the holiness which is His from eternity. Yet as on earth He is much less honored than He should be, and is even sometimes dishonored by impious oaths and blasphemous execrations, we therefore desire and pray that His name may be celebrated with praise, honor, and glory, as it is praised, honored, and glorified in heaven. We pray that His honor and glory may be so constantly in our hearts, in our souls, and on our lips, that we may glorify Him with all veneration, both internal and external, and, like the citizens of heaven, celebrate with all the energies of our being the praises of the holy and glorious God.

We pray that as the blessed spirits in heaven praise and glorify God with one mind and one accord, mankind may do the same; that all men may embrace the religion of Christ, and, dedicating

[1] Ps. xcviii. 3.

themselves unreservedly to God, may believe that He is the fountain of all holiness, and that there is nothing pure or holy that does not emanate from the holiness of His divine name. According to the Apostle, the Church is cleansed "by the laver of water in the word of life,"[1] meaning by "the word of life" the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in which we are baptized and sanctified.

SECOND

As, then, for those on whom His name is not invoked there can exist no expiation, no purity, no integrity, we desire and pray that mankind, emerging from the darkness of infidelity and illumined by the rays of the divine light, may confess the power of His name; that seeking in Him true sanctity, and receiving by His grace the sacrament of baptism, in the name of the holy and undivided Trinity, they may arrive at perfect holiness.

THIRD

Our prayers and petitions also regard those who have forfeited the purity of baptism and sullied the robe of innocence, thus introducing again into their unhappy souls the foul spirit that before possessed them. We desire, and beseech God, that in them also may His name be hallowed: that, entering into themselves and returning to the paths of true wisdom, they may recover, through the sacrament of penance, their lost holiness, and become pure and holy temples in which God may dwell.

FOURTH

We also pray that God would shed His light on the minds of all, to enable them to see that every good and perfect gift, "coming down from the Father of lights,"[2] proceeds from His bounty, and to refer to Him temperance, justice, life, salvation. In a word, we pray that all external blessings of soul and body which regard life and salvation may be referred to Him whose hands, as the Church proclaims, shower down every blessing on the world. Does the sun by his light, do the other heavenly bodies

[1] Eph. v. 26. [2] James i. 17.

by the harmony of their motions, minister to man? Is life maintained by the respiration of that pure air which surrounds us? Are all living creatures supported by that profusion of fruits and of vegetable productions with which the earth is enriched and diversified? Do we enjoy the blessings of peace and tranquillity through the agency of the civil magistrate? All these and innumerable other blessings we receive from the infinite goodness of God. Nay, those causes which philosophers term "secondary" we should consider as instruments wonderfully adapted to our use, by which the hand of God distributes to us His blessings and showers them upon us with liberal profusion.

FIFTH

But the principal object to which this petition refers is that all recognize and revere the Spouse of Christ, our most holy mother the Church, in whom alone is that copious and perennial fountain which cleanses and effaces the stains of sin; from whom we receive all the sacraments of salvation and sanctification, which are, as it were, so many celestial channels conveying to us the fertilizing dew which sanctifies the soul; to whom alone, and to those whom she embraces and fosters in her maternal bosom, belongs the invocation of that divine Name which alone, under heaven, is given to men, whereby they can be saved.[1]

NOTE

The pastor will urge with peculiar emphasis that it is the part of a dutiful child not only to pray for his Father in word, but in deed and in work to endeavor to afford a bright example of the sanctification of His holy name. Would to God that there were none who, while they pray daily for the sanctification of the name of God, violate and profane it, as far as on them depends, by their conduct; who are sometimes the guilty cause why God Himself is blasphemed; and of whom the Apostle has said, "The name of God through you is blasphemed among the Gentiles,"[2] and Ezekiel: "They entered among the nations whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when it was said of them:

[1] Acts iv. 12. See Aug. serm. 181, de tempore, and Greg. lib. 35, Moral, c. 6.

[2] Rom. ii. 24.

This is the people of the Lord, and they are come forth out of his land."[1] Their lives and morals are the standard by which the unlettered multitude judge of religion itself and of its founder: to live, therefore, according to its rules, and to regulate their words and actions according to its maxims, is to give others an edifying example, by which they will be powerfully stimulated to praise, honor, and glorify the name of our Father who is in heaven. To excite others to the praise and exaltation of the divine name is an obligation which our Lord Himself has imposed on us: "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven";[2] and the prince of the Apostles says: "Having your conversation good among the Gentiles that by the good works, which they shall behold in you they may glorify God in the day of visitation."[3]

Sermons

Hallowed be Thy Name

BY THE REV. L. RULAND, D.D.

Hallowed be thy name. This is the first petition in the Lord's Prayer, and as our dear Saviour taught us to ask first of all that God's name may be reverenced, this petition undoubtedly contains something of primary importance in the life of man.

Almighty God, our merciful Father in Heaven, is the Creator of all things. When this fact is established, it follows that there can be no other aim and object for the whole of creation than the honor and glory of God. What greater interest can we have in life than the effort to attain the object for which we were created, and to realize the aim of our existence? Nothing causes more painful disappointment than the sense that after exerting oneself to the utmost, all has been in vain, and the end has not been reached. The Greeks, who were so logical in all their thought, regarded aimless labor as a fearful punishment. You have heard of the Danaidae, who toiled incessantly to fill barrels with no bottom. Are such Danaidae purely fabulous? If you look around, you will discover many who toil day and night to acquire

[1] Ezek. xxxvi. 20. [2] Matt. v. 16. [3] 1 Peter ii. 12.

earthly riches, fancying that the vessel of their earthly existence is strong and lasting; they never give a thought to the eternal Source of all life, their Father in Heaven. When death comes, he crushes with his heavy tread their frail vessel of temporal possessions and all is lost, so that they appear before their Judge with empty hands.

We cannot imagine the bitter disappointment felt by one who in the light of eternity looks back upon his wasted life. Our Saviour wished to spare us this sorrow, and so He taught us to seek first of all the glory of God as the all-important object of our existence. For when we say, "Hallowed be thy name," we pray in the first instance that God's name may be sanctified in and through us.

What is meant by God's name? Of all God's creatures we human beings alone have the gift of speech. All the memories, thoughts, and ideas that we have ever had regarding a thing may be recalled to our minds by certain sounds, which we describe as its name. Thus the name of God comprises for us all that we know and believe about Him; it is at once revelation and a profession of faith. The name of God is the loftiest of all conceptions, the holiest of all words. "Holy and terrible is his name." God Himself revealed His own infinity when in the burning bush He called Himself Jahwe — I am who am.

In my previous sermon I invited you to accompany me in thought to the Mountain of the Beatitudes; to-day let us again visit the Holy Land, going this time to the summit of Mount Sion.

There in the Temple prayers and sacrifices were offered night and morning to the one true God who had revealed His name to the people of Israel. But though we might listen to the priests' prayers and songs of thanksgiving, we should never hear that name uttered; it was too holy and awe-inspiring to be spoken. Once only in the year, when on the great day of atonement the sin offering was made, the high priest dipped a bunch of hyssop in the blood of the victim, and, wearing his robes of office, entered the Holy Place at sunrise, passing behind the heavy curtains into the darkness of the Holy of Holies. The people could not see him, but all were aware that the moment had come for

him to call upon the Holy Name of Jahwe; and in silent reverence they muffled their faces and bowed down to the earth.

Under the old dispensation the name of God was fraught with terror and hope, but to us it is full of glorious realization. To us has our Saviour appeared, for "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." We connect with the name of God a far deeper significance than did the Israelites, for to use it conveys the three Divine Persons, — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, — and the miracles of our Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification. Although we are no longer restrained by fear from pronouncing the name of God, it is still as holy and reverend as it was to the Jews, and St. Paul says: "Let every one depart from iniquity who nameth the name of the Lord" (2 Tim. ii. 19).

"Whose image and inscription is this?" was the question addressed by Christ to the Pharisees when they showed Him the tribute money. "Whose image and inscription is this?" is the question that we must ask with reference to every human being placed by our heavenly Father in this world and made in His likeness. If faith is banished from our hearts, reason alone will not be able to assign a fitting inscription to human existence. Some will say that man is lord of the world, others that he is the product of blind chance; no one could ever decide unless the finger of God had traced His holy name as an inscription on the human soul, rendering it naturally Christian. Hence the name of God must be sanctified in and through us during our whole life.

The first essential is for it to be stamped on the soul in childhood. The name of God must be familiar to a child both at home and at school. When Christianity was first taught, a high degree of intellectual culture existed in the world, and in spite of her unassuming form — to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness — the Church occupied a favorable position. Pagan civilization had a religious basis, and had outwardly prospered, but in course of time this outward semblance lost all real meaning, for the ancient faith had been destroyed by doubt and ridicule. Christianity adapted itself to the old forms and acted like leaven, filling them with a new significance, until at last it had renewed the face of the earth. Then, equipped with the

eternal truth of Divine Revelation and also with the learning of ancient civilization, the Church was able to encounter nations previously barbaric, and instruct them in things necessary for their religious and temporal welfare. For centuries no one questioned her right to control education, and it is only recently that scholars have begun to go their own way, which is frequently in direct opposition to faith in Revelation. Perhaps no erroneous doctrine has had such disastrous results as the superficial statement that there must needs be antagonism between science and religion. It is true that the field covered by secular science is now so vast that it could not possibly stand under the direct control of the Church. Science is now a grown-up daughter, taking her place beside her mother the Church; but she should never forget her early home, or deny that she received her earliest training there. There is no antagonism between faith and knowledge, — where knowledge ends, faith begins; where the light of intellect fails to illumine the path of the scientist, the rays of Divine Revelation shine forth. Scientific research cannot be carried on exclusively by churchmen, but God's name ought still to be inscribed upon every department of knowledge, for the aim and object of all education is to render man capable of realizing the purpose of his existence. Schools at the present day are contented if they supply the young with useful information, and fit them to earn their livelihood and become reasonably good portions of the machinery of earthly life. But "what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul" (Mark viii. 36).

Adherents of the modern school of thought have no right to say that this is an exaggerated reproof. They maintain that it is the business of the state and state-provided school to look after the temporal interests of the people, and that the Church may attend to their spiritual welfare. In opposition to this theory is the authoritative utterance of our Divine Lord and Master, who emphatically impresses upon us all that the one thing needful is to seek the Kingdom of God with all the faculties of our mind, and He has taught us to say, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." The one thing needful cannot be subordinated to any scheme of instruction; the name of the most high

God cannot be put on a level with the multiplication table, nor can the worship of the supreme Ruler and Creator of the universe — the chief end for which we were created — be regarded as of less importance than lessons in reading and writing. Religion is not a lifeless thing, it is the atmosphere that gives life to our souls, and it ought to permeate our whole existence and determine all our actions. At the beginning and end of each day's work we say: "Hallowed be thy name," and the thought should remain in our hearts while our hands are busy with their daily occupations.

A philosopher seated at his desk may be able to distinguish the natural and supernatural aims of men, but in actual life this distinction does not exist, and all education is worthless unless it enables a man to attain the end proposed for him by his Creator. What would it benefit an army to equip it with first-rate weapons, if it were left without leaders and without an object, so that each soldier could go wherever he chose? Every good teacher rightly expects his pupils to be grateful to him if they succeed in life. Those, however, who give instruction quite apart from all mention of religion, must expect to hear the children of this world reproach them at the last day, saying: "All that you taught us was vain; you never spoke to us of God; you showed us pictures of all kinds of things, but allowed the image of God to be obliterated in our souls; you made us learn the names of earthly kings in remote ages, but not the name of the King of Heaven, whose reign is everlasting; we know all about minute germs and fungi, and nothing at all about God."

My Brethren, all creation exists for the glory of God: the earth, sea, and stars extol Him, the spirits in Heaven sing His praise; our lives belong to Him, and therefore we must teach our children to pronounce His Name; all our systems of education ought to be inscribed with it, and it should be written large upon our whole existence.

We ought to do our daily work in God's name. A mere animal devoid of reason may be satisfied if it can supply the needs of the moment without regarding its existence as a whole; but man sees how events are connected and tries to obtain a comprehensive view of all his actions.

If nothing else were required of us but to enjoy ourselves, we should have no difficulty in constructing a uniform scheme of life; but stern reality teaches us that enjoyment is not all. Who will help us to bear the burden and heat of the day, who will stand by us in our struggles and warfare, if we cannot range ourselves under a banner that will lead us to victory? Even wicked men show us how impossible it is to attempt a serious undertaking unaided, for as soon as they encounter any obstacle they blasphemously curse God's name and try to accomplish their designs in the name of the devil, because their corrupt hearts cannot rise to seek assistance in the name of the Lord. It is horrible even to think of such abominable sins; but nevertheless this dark background shows up more brightly the pious uplifting of the heart to God in all difficulties and trials, the trustful appeal to His holy name, and the crown of glory bestowed on those who patiently endure and eventually triumph in the name of the Lord.

God's holy name ought to be inscribed not only over places where we work, but also over those where we take our pleasure. Art furnishes us with many delights, but we should never forget that though poets extol her as inspired, she is in reality the offspring of religion, since all art originated in the worship of God. The first achievements of architecture were temples, richly ornamented with a view to beauty, not solidity of structure, and the psalmist's harp sounded the praises of God. The drama had its rise in religious worship, and the greatest sculptors and painters, men like Michelangelo and Raphael, dedicated their greatest skill to the service of the sanctuary. Nowadays art is often a degenerate daughter of religion, and refuses to recognize her mother, and possibly for that very reason she is frequently barren, unendurable, and incomprehensible. She has forsaken her home, and her brow is no longer crowned with the consecration of God's holy name.

Some time ago I visited a museum where I saw a stone completely covered with hieroglyphic inscriptions. When it had been discovered no one was able to decipher it, but the finder was not discouraged. He noticed that one particular sign was of frequent recurrence, and by dint of much study he came to the conclusion that it was the name of a king. This name gave the

clue by means of which he was able to read the rest of the inscription, and even to restore the dead language in which it was written. I think we may regard this as a parable: our souls bear the image and inscription of Almighty God, who made them. Whatever may be the various aims of men's endeavors, the name of God remains inscribed on the heart of every human being; so let us hope and pray that this most holy name may once more prove a bond of union; that it may serve to draw the hearts of men together, so they may again learn to understand the old language of religion in which we pray "Hallowed be thy name."

The Holy Name

BY THE REV. W. D. STRAPPINI, S.J.

1. How can we begin this new year of our lives better than under the invocation of His holy name? What can we do better than call to our minds all that this holy name means to us?

How much significance there is in a name! The name of a great man when it sounds in our ears brings to our minds the mighty deeds which have made the doer of them to stand out before mankind as one set on a pinnacle, an enduring example of what can be done by men; a lasting encouragement to others to spur them on that they may do likewise. Not indeed that great men, great that is in the eyes of mankind, are all to be imitated always in that wherein they are esteemed great. And yet great men, those who have distinguished themselves above and beyond their fellow men, are all serviceable to us. If they do not teach us what to do they at least are conspicuous examples of what we should avoid. So great men are useful to mankind, and it is a fitting recognition of their services to men, whether rendered knowingly or unknowingly, that they should have the reward of being called great.

2. Now this is a reward sometimes bestowed by God Himself. David was a great man. He was great by his valor, great by his deeds, great by his sufferings. He was great by those many admirable qualities which enabled him to rise from being a simple shepherd to be the king of an historic people. If his sins were great, he was great by his repentance. And how great he is by

the expression he has given in his psalms to those thoughts and aspirations, welling up indeed from the hearts of many before him and many after him, but nowhere finding such true and powerful expression as in his own words! David was great in all those ways, and it was as a reward that God said to him: "I have made thee a great name, great as the names of the great ones on the earth."

With the opening of the new year we celebrate the memory of that name which is great above all names. If for his great deeds a great name was prepared for David, it was for His greater deeds that a still greater name was given to Our Lord; it was for His great deeds that God exalted Him, and bestowed upon Him a name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

He was given a great name because He was faithfully to do a great work; He was to work out the liberation and the salvation of mankind, and because He did this work He was given the great name of Jesus, which means "saviour"!

3. Many men have been called liberators and saviours. They have liberated their people from captivity, as Moses liberated the Israelites, and they have saved their people, as David saved his people from Goliath. By waging war, successful war, many have been called great liberators. Yes — but at the cost of how much misery and how much affliction! How many ruined towns and desolate homesteads have they not made in gaining for themselves their title! Yes — they were great, as men of this world are accounted great, but Christ our Lord is great with a greatness not based on the false standards of men. Not by war and destruction, not by the ruin of hearths and homes, not by the shedding of blood did He win His name of Saviour — but stop! What am I saying? There was toil, and there was labor, and there was suffering, and there was shedding of blood, but it was He who toiled, it was He who labored, it was He who suffered, and the blood which was shed was His very own!

4. "And his name was called Jesus." All names were possible to Him. The Father almighty might have chosen a name for His Son from any of the mighty works in which that Son had co-operated — the Son had co-operated in the creation of

heaven and earth, for St. John tells us, *without him was made nothing that was made* — yet not from any of these mighty works was His name chosen. No; not from His creative works, not from His divine attributes, was His name chosen, but His name was taken from those sinful men whom He came to save! The name which is above every name, the name which is singled out for the Son of God to bear, this glorious name of Jesus, is given to Him for what He has done and for what He has suffered for us men and for our salvation.

5. It is a name not only glorious for Christ to bear; it is a name full of overflowing consolation for us, full of the certainty of help just in those circumstances in which no other name can hold out any promise. Men by their actions may make their names great in the estimation of their fellow men, but they cannot make their names a solid means of salvation from passion and error and the downward tendencies of human nature, salvation from sin and moral death. In this respect — and think how much it is — the Holy Name given to our Lord differs from all other names; not merely a glorious name for the Messias to bear, but a daily and hourly reminder to us of the source of all our graces and blessings. This is what He tells us Himself. The day before He suffered, seeing the grief of His sorrowing apostles, He consoled them with the promise: "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you." It was as if He had said, you need not wait for me as your mediator to pray for you, pray yourselves, using my name, and the power of my name with your heavenly Father will win for you all that you shall rightly ask for. No wonder that that name is a power with God. Think of all the divine bearer of that name did and suffered on behalf of those who bring their petitions to the throne of God under the shelter of that greatest of names. Do we want evidence of the wonder-working power of that name? In the Acts of the Apostles we read how St. Peter has shown us the power of that name when rightly invoked. Going with St. John into the Temple they found a lame man lying at the gate, who lifted up his eyes and hands and besought alms. Turning to him St. Peter said: "Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, I give thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,

arise, and walk." And in the power of that name he straightway arose and walked and went with them into the Temple, praising God, who had given to man a name of such power. St. Peter knew the power of that name, for did he not remember that when his Master had sent him and the other apostles on their first missionary journey they had come back rejoicing and saying, "Lord, the devils also are subject to us in thy name."

6. "And His name was called Jesus." Each one of us can say, He was called this name for me. He is not simply the Saviour of other men; He is *my* Saviour also. This name is given for each of us to invoke, as much as it was given to the apostles and the first disciples. This name is no less powerful now than it was in the days of St. Peter. If we do not always obtain the same results when we invoke that holy name, the fault lies with ourselves; we perhaps have not the purity of heart which opened heaven to their invocation, or our own self-interest is too largely our real motive.

When you invoke this holy name see that you make yourself not unworthy of a hearing. Let this name rise to God from pure lips and from a soul free from sin; then shall you begin to know what power there is in the invocation of that holiest of names; then shall you begin to know the reason we all have to thank God that His name was called Jesus.

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SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION

SUBJECT

HOLY ORDERS

TEXT

Who arose and took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. — MATT. ii. 21.

And opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. — MATT. ii. 11. (Gospel of Epiphany.)

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. St. Joseph is the patron of priests. He was the divinely appointed guardian over the infancy and childhood of our Lord. But wonderful and lofty as were the dignity and office thus conferred upon the holy patriarch, they did not bestow such powers over the Lord as are given to the priests of the New Law, who under the Eucharistic species are able to call down upon our daily altars the body and blood of Christ, to offer them in sacrifice, and administer them to the faithful.

Our Lord Himself was the first priest of the New Dispensation, and the Magi in offering Him incense bore witness to His sacerdotal character. The Saviour exercised the office of His priesthood when He offered Himself in sacrifice. This great act of Christ is perpetuated by the Christian priesthood.

I. The dignity and power of the ministers of the Church. 1. The *dignity* of the priesthood is seen in this, that it gives power over the real body of Christ; that is, the power of consecrating, offering, and administering the Holy Eucharist. 2. The *authority* of the priestly office consists in jurisdiction over the mystical body of Christ; that is, in the power to teach and rule the faithful.

II. The power and dignity of the priesthood are conferred in ordination. 1. Meaning of the name "ordination." This Sac-

rament is called Orders, because it constitutes various grades of rank and function in the sacred ministry relative to the Blessed Sacrament. 2. The external sign of this Sacrament consists in the imposition of hands and the delivery of the sacred instruments proper to the order received, conjoined with the words of ordination. 3. The internal grace. The Sacrament of Orders imprints an indelible character on the soul and confers a special grace for the discharge of the duties of the sacred ministry.

III. Minister and subject of Orders. 1. The minister of this sacrament is the Bishop. 2. The qualifications for Holy Orders are proper age, sufficient knowledge, freedom from impediments, etc.

CONCLUSION. 1. Gratitude to God for the Sacrament of Holy Orders on which the administration of most of the Sacraments depends. 2. The burden of the priesthood is heavy and responsible. The faithful should pray for their own pastors, and ask the Lord that He send more laborers into His harvest (Matt. ix. 38).

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part II

THE SACRAMENT OF ORDERS

THE SACRAMENT OF ORDERS, WHY TO BE EXPLAINED

From an attentive consideration of the nature of the other sacraments we shall find little difficulty in perceiving that so dependent are they all on the Sacrament of Orders that without its intervention some could not exist or be administered, while others would be stripped of the religious rites and solemn ceremonies and of that exterior respect which should accompany their administration. The pastor, therefore, following up his exposition of the sacraments, will deem it a duty to bestow on the Sacrament of Orders an attention proportioned to its importance. This exposition cannot fail to prove salutary, in the first place, to the pastor himself; in the next place, to those who may have embraced the ecclesiastical state; and finally, to the faithful at large. To the pastor himself, because while explaining this Sacrament to others, he himself is excited to stir up within him the grace which he

received at his ordination; to others whom the Lord has called to his sanctuary, by inspiring them with the same love of piety and imparting to them a knowledge of those things which will qualify them the more easily to advance to higher orders; to the faithful at large, by making known to them the respect due to the ministers of religion. It also not infrequently occurs that among the faithful there are many who intend their children for the ministry while yet young, and some who are themselves candidates for that holy state; and it is proper that such persons should not be entirely unacquainted with its nature and obligations.[1]

DIGNITY OF THE SACRAMENT

The faithful then are to be made acquainted with the exalted dignity and excellence of this Sacrament in its highest degree, which is the priesthood. Priests and bishops are, as it were, the interpreters and heralds of God, commissioned in his name to teach mankind the law of God and the precepts of a Christian life; they are the representatives of God upon earth. It is impossible, therefore, to conceive a more exalted dignity, or a function more sacred. Justly, then, are they called not only angels[2] but gods,[3] holding as they do the place and power and authority of God on earth. But the priesthood, at all times an elevated office, transcends in the New Law all others in dignity. The power of consecrating and offering the body and blood of our Lord and of remitting sin, with which the priesthood of the New Law is invested, is such as cannot be comprehended by the human mind, still less is it equalled by, or likened to, anything on earth. Again, as Christ was sent by the Father,[4] and the Apostles and Disciples by Christ,[5] even so are priests invested with the same power, and sent "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."[6]

[1] Concerning the duties of clerics, see the sessions of the Council of Trent de reformatione. On Orders as a Sacrament, see the same Council, sess. 13. On each of the orders, see the Fourth Council of Carthage, 398 A. D.

[2] Mal. ii. 7. [3] Ps. lxxxi. 6.

[4] John viii. 36. [5] Matt. xxviii. 19.

[6] Ephes. iv. 12. On the dignity of the priesthood, see Ignat. epist. ad Smyrn.; Amb. lib. 5, epist. 32, et lib. 10, ep. 82; Chrysost. hom. 60, ad pop. Antioch; in Matt. hom. 83; Nazian. orat. 17, ad suos cives.

THOSE WHO ARE TO RECEIVE ORDERS MUST BE SPECIALLY CALLED

This office, therefore, is not to be rashly imposed on any one. It is to be intrusted only to those who, by the sanctity of their lives, by their knowledge, their faith, and their prudence, are capable of sustaining its weight: "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself," says the Apostle, "but he that is called by God, as Aaron was."[1] This call from God we recognize in the call of the lawful ministers of His Church. Of those who would arrogantly obtrude themselves into the sanctuary the Lord has said: "I did not send prophets, yet they ran."[2] Such sacrilegious intruders bring the greatest misery on themselves, and the heaviest calamities on the Church of God.[3] But as in every undertaking the end proposed is of the highest importance (when the end is good, everything proceeds well), the candidate for the ministry should first of all be admonished to propose to himself no motive unworthy of so exalted a station, — an admonition which demands particular attention in these our days, when the faithful are but too unmindful of its spirit. There are those who aspire to the priesthood with a view to secure to themselves a livelihood, who, like worldlings in matters of trade or commerce, look to nothing but sordid gain. True, the natural and divine law command that, to use the words of the Apostle, "they that serve the altar, partake with the altar";[4] but to approach the altar for gain, this indeed were a sacrilege of the blackest die. Others there are whom a love of honors and a spirit of ambition conduct to the altar, others whom the gold of the sanctuary attracts; and of this we require no other proof than that they have no idea of embracing the ecclesiastical state except for the sake of some rich ecclesiastical benefice. These are they whom the Lord denounces as hirelings,[5] who, as we read in Ezekiel, feed themselves, and not the sheep.[6] Their turpitude and profligacy have not only tarnished the lustre and degraded the dignity of the sacerdotal character in the eyes of the faithful, but the priesthood brings to them in its train the same rewards which the Apostleship brought to Judas — eternal perdition.

[1] Heb. v. 4.
[2] Jerem. xxiii. 21.
[3] See dist. 23, multis in capitibus.
[4] 1 Cor. ix. 13.
[5] John x. 12.
[6] Ezek. xxxiv. 2.

But they who, in obedience to the legitimate call of God, undertake the priestly office solely with a view to promote His glory, are truly said to enter "by the door." The obligation of promoting His glory is not confined to them alone; for this were all men created; this the faithful in particular, consecrated as they have been by baptism to God, should promote with their whole hearts, their whole souls, and with all their strength. Not enough, therefore, that the candidate for holy orders should propose to himself to seek in all things the glory of God, a duty common alike to all men, and particularly incumbent on the faithful: he must also be resolved to serve God in holiness and righteousness, in the particular sphere in which his ministry is to be exercised. As in an army all obey the command of the general, while among them some hold the place of colonel, some of captain, and others stations of subordinate rank; so in the Church all without distinction should be earnest in the pursuit of piety and innocence, the principal means of rendering homage to God. To those, however, who are admitted to the Sacrament of Orders, special offices belong; on them special functions devolve, — to offer sacrifice for themselves and for all the people; to instruct others in the law of God; to exhort and form them to a faithful and ready compliance with its injunctions; and to administer the sacraments, the sources of grace. In a word, set apart from the rest of the people, they are engaged in a ministry the most sacred and the most exalted.

THE POWER CONFERRED BY THE SACRAMENT OF ORDERS IS TWOFOLD, — OF JURISDICTION AND OF ORDERS

Having explained these matters to the faithful, the pastor will next proceed to expound those things which are peculiar to this Sacrament, that thus the candidate for orders may be enabled to form a just estimate of the nature of the office to which he aspires, and to know the extent of the power conferred by Almighty God on His Church and her ministers. This power is twofold, — of jurisdiction and of orders. The power of orders has reference to the body of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist; that of jurisdiction to His mystical body, the Church, for to this latter belong the government of his spiritual king-

dom on earth and the direction of the faithful in the way of salvation. In the power of Orders is included not only that of consecrating the Holy Eucharist, but also of preparing the soul for its worthy reception, and whatever else has reference to the sacred mysteries. Of this the Scriptures afford numerous proofs, among which the most striking and weighty are contained in the words recorded by St. John and St. Matthew on this subject. "As the Father hath sent me," says the Redeemer, "I also send you. . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."[1] Again, "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."[2] These passages, if expounded by the pastor from the doctrine, and on the authority of the Fathers, will shed considerable light on this important subject.

GREATNESS OF THIS POWER

This power far transcends that which was given to those who, under the law of nature, exercised a special superintendence over sacred things.[3] The age anterior to the written law must have had its priesthood, a priesthood invested with spiritual power. That it had a law cannot be questioned; and so intimately interwoven are these two things with one another that, take away one, you of necessity remove the other.[4] Since, then, prompted by the dictates of the instinctive feelings of his nature man recognizes the worship of God as a duty, it follows as a necessary consequence that under every form of government some persons must have been constituted the official guardians of sacred things, the legitimate ministers of the divine worship; and of such persons the power might in a certain sense be called spiritual.

With this power the priesthood of the Old Law was also invested; but although superior in dignity to that exercised under the law of nature, it was far inferior to the spiritual power en-

[1] John xx. 21, 22, 23. [2] Matt. xviii. 18.

[3] See de consecr. dist. 2, cap. nihil in sacrificiis; C. of Trent, sess. 22, cap. 1; Irenaeus, lib. 4, c. 34; Aug. lib. 19, de civit. Dei, cap. 23.

[4] Heb. vii. 12.

joyed under the Gospel dispensation. The power with which the Christian priesthood is clothed is a heavenly power, raised above that of angels. It has its source not in the Levitical priesthood, but in Christ the Lord, who was a priest not according to Aaron, but according to the order of Melchisedech.[1] He it is who, endowed with supreme authority to grant pardon and grace, has bequeathed this power to His Church, a power limited, however, in its extent, and attached to the sacraments.

NAME OF THIS SACRAMENT

To exercise this power, therefore, ministers are appointed and solemnly consecrated, and this solemn consecration is denominated "Ordination," or "the Sacrament of Orders." To designate this Sacrament, the word "Orders" has been made use of by the Holy Fathers, because its signification is very comprehensive, and therefore well adapted to convey an idea of the dignity and excellence of the ministers of God. Understood in its strict and proper acceptation, "order" is the disposition of superior and subordinate parts, which when united present a combination so harmonious as to stand in mutual and accordant relations. Comprising, then, as the ministry does, many gradations and various functions, and disposed, as all these gradations and functions are, with the greatest regularity, this Sacrament is very appropriately called "the Sacrament of Orders."

ORDERS, A SACRAMENT

That Holy Orders are to be numbered among the sacraments of the Church, the Council of Trent establishes on the same principle to which we have so often referred in proving the other sacraments. A sacrament is a sensible sign of an invisible grace, and with these characters Holy Orders are invested. Their external forms are a sensible sign of the grace and power which they confer on the receiver. Holy Orders, therefore, are really and truly a sacrament.[2] Hence the bishop, handing to the can-

[1] Heb. vii. 11.

[2] Sess. 23, de ordine. On Orders as a Sacrament, see C. of Trent, sess. 23, de ordine. cc. 1, 3, can. 3, 4, 5; C. of Florence, in decret. de sacr.; Aug. lib. 2, contr. epist. Parmen, cap. 13; de bono conjug. cap. 24; lib. 1, de bapt. contra Donat. c. 1; Leo. epist, 18; Greg. in c. 10, lib. 1 Reg.

didate for priest's orders a chalice which contains wine and water, and a paten with bread, says: "Receive the power of offering Sacrifice," etc., words which, according to the uniform interpretation of the Church, impart power, when the proper matter is supplied, of consecrating the Holy Eucharist, and impress a character on the soul. To this power is annexed grace duly and lawfully to discharge the priestly office, according to these words of the Apostle: "I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee, by the imposition of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear: but of power, and of love, and of sobriety."[1]

THE MINISTER OF THE SACRAMENT OF ORDERS IS A BISHOP

That to the Bishop belongs exclusively the administration of this Sacrament is a matter of certainty, and is easily proved by the authority of Scripture, by traditional evidence the most unequivocal, by the unanimous attestation of all the Holy Fathers, by the decrees of Councils, and by the practice of the Universal Church. Some Abbots, it is true, were occasionally permitted to confer Minor Orders: all, however, admit that even this is the proper office of the Bishop, to whom, and to whom alone, it is lawful to confer the other Orders. Sub-deacons, Deacons, and Priests are ordained by one Bishop only; but according to Apostolic tradition, a tradition which has always been preserved in the Church, he himself is consecrated by three Bishops.

NECESSITY OF EXTREME CAUTION IN PROMOTING TO ORDERS

We now come to explain the qualifications necessary in the candidate for Orders, particularly for priesthood. From what we have said on this subject, it will not be difficult to decide what should also be the qualifications of those who are to be admitted to other Orders, according to their respective offices and comparative dignities. That too much precaution cannot be used in promoting to orders is obvious from this consideration alone,—the other sacraments impart grace for the sanctification and salvation of those who receive them; Holy Orders for the good of the Church, and therefore for the salvation of all

[1] 2 Tim. i. 6, 7.

her children. Hence it is that Orders are conferred on certain appointed days only, — days on which, according to the most ancient practice of the Church, a solemn fast is observed, to obtain from God by holy and devout prayer ministers not unworthy of their high calling, qualified to exercise the transcendent power with which they are to be invested, with propriety and to the edification of His Church.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE PRIESTHOOD

In the candidate for priesthood, therefore, integrity of life is a first and essential qualification, not only because to procure, or even to permit, his ordination while his conscience is burdened with the weight of mortal sin is to aggravate his former guilt by an additional crime of the deepest enormity, but also because it is his duty to enlighten the darkness of others by the lustre of his virtue and the bright example of innocence of life. The lessons addressed by the Apostle to Titus and to Timothy[1] should therefore supply the pastor with matter for instruction; nor should he omit to observe that while by the command of God bodily defects disqualified for the ministry of the altar in the Old Law, in the Christian dispensation such exclusion rests principally on the deformities of the mind. The candidate for Orders, therefore, in accordance with the holy practice of the Catholic Church, will first study diligently to purify his conscience from sin in the Sacrament of Penance.

In the priest we also look not merely for that portion of knowledge which is necessary to the proper administration of the sacraments; more is expected, — an intimate acquaintance with the science of the Sacred Volume should fit him to instruct the faithful in the mysteries of religion and in the precepts of the Gospel, to reclaim from sin, and to excite to piety and virtue. The due consecration and administration of the sacraments and the instruction of those who are committed to his care in the way of salvation constitute two important duties of the pastor. "The lips of the priest," says Malachy, "shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth: because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts."[2] For a due consecration and ad-

[1] Tit. i. and 1 Tim. iii.

[2] Malach. ii. 7.

ministration of the sacraments a moderate share of knowledge suffices; but to instruct the faithful in all the truths and duties of religion demands considerable ability and extensive knowledge. In all priests, however, deep learning is not demanded; it is sufficient that each should possess competent knowledge to discharge the duties of his own particular office in the ministry.

ON WHOM ORDERS ARE NOT TO BE CONFERRED

The Sacrament of Orders is not to be conferred on very young or on insane persons, because such do not enjoy the use of reason; if administered, however, it no doubt impresses a character. The age required for the reception of the different Orders may be easily known by consulting the decrees of the Council of Trent. Persons obligated to render certain stipulated services to others, and therefore not at their own disposal, are inadmissible to Orders; persons accustomed to shed blood, and homicides, are also excluded from the ecclesiastical state by an ecclesiastical law, and are irregular. The same law excludes those whose admission into the ministry may and must bring contempt on religion; and hence illegitimate children, and all who are born out of lawful wedlock, are disqualified for the sacred ministry. Finally, persons who are maimed, or who labor under any remarkable personal deformity, are also excluded; such defects offend the eye, and frequently incapacitate for the discharge of the duties of the ministry.[1]

EFFECTS OF THE SACRAMENT OF ORDERS

Having explained these matters, it remains that the pastor unfold the effects of this Sacrament. It is clear, as we have already said, that the Sacrament of Orders, although primarily instituted for the advantage and edification of the Church, imparts to him who receives it with the proper dispositions a grace which qualifies and enables him to discharge with fidelity the duties which it imposes, and among which is to be numbered the administration of the sacraments. As baptism qualifies for their reception, so Orders qualify for their administration. Or-

[1] See Codex Juris Canonici, cans. 968 ff.

ders also confer another grace, which is a special power in reference to the Holy Eucharist; a power full and perfect in the priest, who alone can consecrate the body and blood of our Lord, but in the subordinate ministers greater or less in proportion to their approximation to the sacred mysteries of the altar. This power is also denominated a spiritual character, which by a certain interior mark impressed on the soul distinguishes the ecclesiastic from the rest of the faithful, and devotes him specially to the divine service. This the Apostle seems to have had in view when he thus addressed Timothy: "Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood."[2] Again, "I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee, by the imposition of my hands."[3]

On the Sacrament of Orders let so much suffice. Our purpose has been to lay before the pastor the most important particulars upon the subject in order to supply him with matter upon which he may draw for the instruction of the faithful and their advancement in Christian piety.

Sermons

Holy Orders

BY THE VERY REV. JAMES J. FOX, D.D.

The grace of God, through Jesus Christ, is the life of the Christian soul and the life of that society of souls established by Jesus Christ which we call the Church. To generate, strengthen, and preserve that life in the individual and in the society Christ instituted the sacraments as the channels of special forms of that grace, to meet the great occasions and needs of the soul. Two of these sacraments have for their object to propagate and continue, throughout the passing generations of men, the divine society itself. One of these is Matrimony; the other is Holy Orders. Holy Orders is a Sacrament, for under visible signs employed in ordination a special grace is conveyed; what the nature of that grace is we shall consider in this instruction.

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 14. [2] 2 Tim. i. 6.

There are, as you know, several steps or grades to be successively received in the Sacrament of Holy Orders: four introductory ones, called minor orders; two others, approaching more intimately to the priesthood itself, and the episcopate. Now the soul of all is the priesthood; to it the others are related as to the centre; for in it the others exist. The priesthood is too, one may say, the very heart of the Church, from whose action the life-giving grace of Christ is circulated through all her members. The Society of Jesus Christ, the Church, is the union of God and His people. That union finds itself completed in the office of the priesthood. The priest is at once the man of the people and the man of God. Let us examine under these two aspects the office to which he is chosen and ordained by the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The priest is the man of the people; their agent, to borrow the phrase of St. Paul, in the things that appertain to God.

I. What we call religious worship consists in acknowledging by suitable actions, internal and external, the majesty, power, holiness of the Almighty, and our complete dependence on Him as our creator and our end. Among all the various external actions which man employs to embody that worship, the most universal, the most significant, is that called sacrifice. Sacrifice of various kinds was the chief element of worship in the ancient law which God gave to the Israelites, to instruct them how they should honor Him in a way pleasing to Himself. These sacrifices consisted of the fruits of the earth, and of animals which were consumed in order to testify that He in whose honor they were offered up is the sovereign law of heaven and earth, the Master of life and death. But the Old Law was in every way imperfect: all its rites and ceremonies were but figures of the new covenant of the Gospel. Its various sacrifices were but foreshadowings of the one great sacrifice of the New Law. You know what that sacrifice is. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, offered Himself up, once for all, on the altar of the Cross, as a sufficient expiation for all men throughout the ages; a victim perfectly worthy of the infinite majesty and holiness of God. Thereafter it was impossible that ever again the blood of sheep or oxen could be pleasing to the Almighty. The only sacrifice

worthy of the New Testament was the one holy, unspotted victim offered up by the Saviour himself. But, then, was the religion that He established to be deprived of the chief element of divine worship? No; for, as you know, our Lord provided at His Last Supper that the supreme sacrifice which He was to offer on the morrow, from the Cross of Calvary, should continue to be offered up daily in His Church, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, till the end of time. As His religion was to be embodied in a living visible society, so it should have a living visible priesthood to offer up a living visible sacrifice. When He had given His Apostles His body and the chalice of His blood, that was to be shed for them and for many to the remission of sins, He appointed them priests, to continue the mystical sacrifice, — "Do this in commemoration of me." And in virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders that power is handed down in the Church from man to man, from generation to generation.

Christ continues as the invisible High Priest to offer the Holy Mass to God; His visible representative on earth is the priest, who at the same time is the representative of the people, on whose behalf the sacrifice is carried out. He is not merely chosen and appointed; he is consecrated by the Sacrament which imparts to him a share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ. This character is not something merely attached to his personality, as an office; it enters into and forms a feature of his very soul, never to be effaced in time or eternity. No wonder that the Church has surrounded the ordination of a priest with the most impressive ceremonies of her ritual. While the candidate lies prostrate before the altar the clergy and the people raise their voices to implore the mercy and grace of God for the chosen one, that he may worthily receive the great commission from on high. The Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, is invoked to come down upon him. As the rite proceeds, the Bishop addresses him with solemn warning and weighty counsel, reminding him of the tremendous mysteries he will handle in his new office. Bishop and assistants implore the Almighty to bless, to sanctify, and to consecrate the man to the service of the things of heaven. As external signs of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the instruments

of the sacrifice are placed in his hands, and the Bishop's hand is extended over him. The power of consecrating and offering the Holy Mass is communicated to him, as it was by the Saviour himself to the Apostles. Finally he is endowed with the power to forgive sins. Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you forgive they are forgiven. Then, when the ordination is completed, this member of the Church is constituted her minister, the agent of his brethren, to represent them and act in their name in the things of God. "For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. v. 1). Henceforth, as he stands at the altar to perform the great sacrifice, he will not be a mere private individual; he will be the public minister and representative of the entire Christian family.

He takes in his hands the divine Victim, and in the name of the entire Church, with her head, Jesus Christ, presents it, sacrifices it before the throne of the Most High. While the sacrifice of the Mass is the same sacrifice as that of the Cross, repeated in a mystical manner, yet in regard to the position of the Church there is a difference between the two. The sacrifice of the Cross was offered up by Jesus Christ alone; in the action of that sacrifice the Church had no active part. But in the Mass the Church does participate in the sacrificial action. It is her sacrifice to God; it is her gift, which has been placed at her disposal by her divine Founder in order that she may be able to present to the Creator a worship worthy of His infinite majesty. Now the Church, made up of an immense number of persons, must act through individuals as her agents or representatives; and the priest is the agent of the Church, acting in her name as he celebrates the sacred mysteries. Just as the act of a ruler or of an ambassador is the act of the nation which he represents, so the sacrificial action of the priest is the act of us all in our character as members of the Church of Jesus Christ. She and you all act by his hand, pray with his lips. Listen to the prayers of the Mass and you will observe that the priest is not using the words "I" and "my," but "me" and "our" and "us." At the beginning of the collect he says: "Let us pray." Opening the Canon

or most solemn part of the Mass he prays: "We humbly beseech thee, most merciful Father, that thou wouldst vouchsafe to accept and bless these gifts, this holy unspotted sacrifice which in the first place we offer thee for thy holy Catholic Church." Whether a congregation be present or not, while exercising his office the priest speaks for us all and is the personification of all, — one person in whom all are united. If the ruler or ambassador of a country be great because the country is great, how high is the priestly dignity of Him in whose person is united the entire Church throughout the world! of him who, chosen from among men, is anointed and consecrated to treat with God in the name of all his brethren, and who is received and approved by God as an acceptable person duly qualified to discharge this majestic office.

II. While Holy Orders consecrates the priest to be the representative of the people before God, it constitutes him at the same time to be the coadjutor or agent of God towards men. "Let a man so account of us," says St. Paul, "as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). The priest, as we have seen, is the representative of the people as he stands at the altar to celebrate the holy sacrifice of the Mass; and from this aspect of his function his dignity surpasses that attached to any other human office. But it is immeasurably enhanced by the rôle which, in the same sublime action, he plays as the minister and representative of God. In order that his religion and his people might forever be provided with a worthy sacrifice which should be pleasing to God, even though God had already received on the altar of the Cross a Victim that for the future disqualified all other victims, the products of the earth, from being any longer suitable gifts to lay upon the altar — Jesus Christ in His boundless love bequeathed Himself, His living personality, Body and Blood, to be at the disposal of His Church in order that her worship of the Almighty might be perfect and wholly acceptable to God. Christ, indeed, having died once, dieth now no more. Nevertheless, by a mystery of His omnipotence He continues in the Mass that same sacrifice which, in blood and death, was consummated on Calvary. He sitteth in glory at the right hand of the Father.

Yet by the power which He imparted to His Apostles, and which flows in an unbroken channel down the ages, in virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, to the priest to-day the minister of God pronounces the awful words of consecration; and forthwith the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world, is present on the altar. The words of God's minister pierce the heavens and the Son of God obeys the call of man, who is His representative. In the Old Testament we read of the encounter of Elias with the false prophets. That man of God laid his gift on the stone, raised his eyes and voice to heaven, imploring God to vouchsafe to give a sign in favor of His servant. Immediately, to the astonishment of the bystanders, flames shot down from the skies and consumed the victim. This wonder sinks into insignificance when compared to the answer which God makes to the call of the priest. He sends not fire to consume the host, but He sends down once more His only beloved Son to be the holy, unspotted Host, to be raised again from earth to heaven, to bring down, in return, mercy and grace on the children of men. At the words of the Blessed Virgin: "Be it done unto me according to thy word," the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity descended on this earth; "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." At the words of the priest, not once, but day after day, year after year, all over the world, the Word, clothed in the flesh which He drew from His immaculate mother, descends among us, bestows Himself on us, that for us and for all the faithful, living and dead, we may have an offering worthy to present before the throne of the Eternal Majesty.

What are the other gifts of God which His minister dispenses? The first is divine truth and doctrine. Faith, as the Apostle says, comes from hearing; and how shall men hear unless there be a preacher? And how shall any preach unless they be sent? The commission to preach was given by Christ to His Apostles. "Go forth and teach the nations." By the grace of Holy Orders the priest shares in that commission; in that Sacrament he is ordained to dispense the truths of faith and expound the precepts of Christ's law to the people. The human qualifications of the preacher may be brilliant or they may be mediocre, but it is not from his human gifts that he derives his authority. It is in

virtue of the imposition of hands in the Sacrament of Holy Orders that he can stand before his people to lay down the law of Christian life with the all-powerful sanction: "Thus saith the Lord." It is that same power which authorizes him to apply to himself the declaration of Christ: "My doctrine is not my doctrine, but the doctrine of him that sent me." Thus the priest is God's minister, who in His name enables us to fulfil the first condition of salvation, which is to know God, to learn the truths which He has revealed in order that we may worthily live in His service and love.

Live in the service of God. To do so we must participate in His own life, which is communicated to us by the grace of Jesus Christ. A new-born child is brought to the priest. The infant is alive indeed with the life of the earth, but he is as yet unborn to God. The priest is the dispenser of the divine life of faith; he baptizes the infant: a transformation is operated in that soul; it is marked for time and eternity with a stamp indicating that it has become a member of Christ's family and following. By the operation of God's minister the child is reborn to the Kingdom of Heaven.

When in later years that soul, by the suicidal act of mortal sin, has killed the divine life within it, the dispenser of the mysteries of God again intervenes to restore the dead soul. The man kneels before him in the Sacrament of Penance. The priest says: "I absolve thee" in the name of the blessed Trinity. As Lazarus in his sepulchre heard the voice of the Master, so the dead soul feels once more the life of grace within it; it comes forth from the sepulchre of everlasting death and lives again to God.

When the man approaches the term of his earthly journey and is about to enter on the last dark struggle, the minister of God has another gift of divine mercy to impart for the occasion. He administers the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, to cleanse the soul and strengthen it for the passage, and in the name of God he bids it set forth in holy hope to meet its Redeemer and its Judge: "Go forth, Christian soul."

Finally, the supreme gift of God, which He bestows on us by the hands of His minister, is not merely His grace, but Himself, the author of grace. Here He reaches, as it were, the utmost

that His mercy can perform. The priest, in His name, places on our tongue the living Bread that came down from heaven; the Body and Blood of the Saviour to be the food of our souls here and the pledge of immortality. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day" (John vi. 55). And having given us, through the priest, this final gift He may say to us: "What more could I have done for you that I have not done?"

III. Besides the order of the priesthood there are, as you know, other grades or orders, which, however, all relate to the priesthood and converge around it as their centre. Each of them ordains the recipient to exercise some function that appertains to the eucharistic sacrifice. In what are called the minor orders, the porter is appointed to open and close, and see to the decency of the visible temple of wood and stone. The lector, or reader, prepares the invisible temples of souls by instructing them in the word of God, while the exorcist co-operates by banishing from them the spirits of evil. The acolyte is ordained to prepare the altar, light the candles, and present the wine for the Sacrament. Then come the higher orders of subdeacon and deacon, who immediately assist the priest in the sacred mystery of the Mass and in the distribution of Christ's Body and Blood to the faithful. Finally, we have the episcopate, the fulness of the priesthood, by which is imparted the power of perpetuating the priesthood of the New Law, in order that the sacrifice and the sacraments instituted by our divine Saviour may continue in the Church till the end of time.

Thus, my dear brethren, by the Sacrament of Holy Orders there is constituted in the visible Church, around the eucharistic throne, an ordered hierarchy of persons, resembling the heavenly hierarchy of cherubim and seraphim, thrones and dominations, angels and archangels, who serve and worship around the Eternal on high. And this earthly hierarchy mingles its voice with that of the celestial choirs, as the priest in the Mass, speaking for the entire Church, prays: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna in the highest, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest."

These considerations on the nature of Holy Orders enable us, my brethren, to understand more clearly the unity of the Church, the manner in which Jesus Christ is, not in a mere figure of speech but in very truth, her head and her life by His living presence on the altar. We understand, too, from the nature of the priest's office what the holy sacrifice is in the worship of the Almighty; how in the person of the priest we all take part in that sublime action. And therefore in order to assist worthily at holy Mass, we too ought, as we enter the church door, to leave behind us all thoughts of earth, all sinful attachments, that our hearts may be worthy of the immaculate Lamb which we are about to offer, and pleasing to the divine majesty to whom we present the priceless gift. Remembering the dignity of the priesthood, and that those on whom it has fallen are but poor, weak, sinful human beings like ourselves, we understand that it is our duty to help them by our prayers; to beg earnestly that God may sustain them by His grace against temptations of what kind soever, and enable them ever worthily and efficaciously to dispense to the souls intrusted to them gifts of God unto life everlasting. Amen.

References

Heckmann, in *Hom. Monthly*, June 1919; Gerrard, in *Pulpit Comm.*, Vol. I; Monsabré, in *Lenten Conferences of 1886;* compare also references to Second Sunday after Easter.

Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, pp. 279 ff.; *Summa Theol.*, Suppl., qq. 34–40; Tanquerey, *De Ordine;* Hurter, *Theol. Dog.*, Vol. III, No. 677; Pohle-Preuss, *The Sacraments,* Vol. IV, pp. 52 ff.; Vaughan, *The Divine Armory,* etc., pp. 814 ff.; Callan, *Illustrations for Sermons,* etc., pp. 225 ff.; Berington and Kirk, *The Faith of Catholics,* Vol. III, pp. 210 ff.; Bellord, *Meditations,* etc., Vol. II, p. 324.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

SUBJECT

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

TEXT

For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office: so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. — Rom. xii. 4, 5.

Analysis

Introduction. St. Paul frequently compares the various members of the Church to the different parts of the human body. Just as all the parts of the latter are more or less dependent one on another and lend mutual aid and assistance to one another, so all the members of the former are bound together in Christ, and should, by mutual charity and good offices, be of assistance one to another. The comparison of the Apostle beautifully illustrates the doctrine of the Communion of Saints which is expressed in the second part of the ninth Article of the Creed. This doctrine is consequent upon the first part of the same Article, which requires faith in the Holy Catholic Church; for the Communion of Saints results from the unity and holiness of the Church.

I. **"Communion": its first meaning.** The Communion of Saints means in the first place fellowship in the external goods of the Church, that is, all have the same faith, the same Baptism, the same Eucharist, the same Sacrifice, and the same Sacraments, the same public prayers, religious functions, etc.

II. **"Communion": its second meaning.** The Communion of Saints means in the second place that the members of the Church share in the internal goods of the Church, that is, they profit by the good done by the other members. 1. The faithful as-

sist each other with their prayers. Christ has taught us to pray for the general interest and salvation of all. 2. The faithful assist each other by their good works, such as the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, the offering of satisfactions and the like.

III. Meaning of "Saints." 1. Those who are called Saints in this Article of the Creed are all the faithful, because all have been sanctified by Baptism and are called to holiness; but the term applies in particular to those in the state of grace. 2. Those who are in mortal sin do not share in the internal goods of the Church, although they derive some advantage from them inasmuch as they retain the virtue of faith and their conversion is assisted by the prayers and good works of the faithful. 3. Those who are in mortal sin and who do not belong to the true Church (Jews, heretics, infidels, apostates, schismatics, and the excommunicated) share in neither the internal nor the external goods of the Church. 4. The Communion of Saints embraces not only the Church on earth, but also extends to heaven and purgatory, because charity unites the three Churches, triumphant, militant, and suffering. The Saints pray for us and for the souls in purgatory, while we honor the Saints and assist the souls in purgatory.

Conclusion. 1. The doctrine of the Communion of Saints affords us hope and consolation. 2. It should be a stimulus to fervor and to the exercise of good works.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article IX of the Creed

The Communion of Saints

THIS ARTICLE TO BE CAREFULLY EXPLAINED

The Evangelist St. John, writing to the faithful on the divine mysteries, tells them that he undertook to instruct them on the subject, "that you," says he, "may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with his son Jesus

Christ."[1] This "fellowship" consists in the Communion of Saints, the subject of the present Article. Would that in its exposition pastors imitated the zeal of St. Paul and of the other Apostles,[2] for not only does it serve as an interpretation of the preceding Article, and is a point of doctrine productive of abundant fruit, but it also teaches the use to be made of the mysteries contained in the Creed, because the great end to which all our researches and knowledge are to be directed is our admission into this most august and blessed society of the Saints, and our steady perseverance therein, "giving thanks [with joy] to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the Saints in light."[3]

IN WHAT "THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS" CONSISTS

The faithful, therefore, in the first place, are to be informed that this Article is, as it were, a sort of explanation of the preceding one, which regards the unity, sanctity, and catholicity of the Church, for the unity of the Spirit, by which she is governed, establishes among all her members a community of spiritual blessings. The fruit of all the sacraments is common to all the faithful, and these sacraments, particularly Baptism, the door, as it were, by which we are admitted into the Church,[4] are so many connecting links which bind and unite them to Jesus Christ. That this Communion of Saints implies a communion of sacraments, the Fathers declare in these words of the Creed: "I confess one baptism."[5] After Baptism, the Eucharist holds the first place in reference to this communion, and after the Eucharist, the other sacraments; for although common to all the sacraments, because all unite us to God, and render us partakers of Him whose grace they communicate to us, this communion belongs in a peculiar manner to the Eucharist, by which it is directly accomplished.[6]

But there is also another communion in the Church which demands attention: every pious and holy action done by one belongs to and becomes profitable to all, through charity, which

[1] John i. 3. [2] Aug. in Joan. Tract. 32. [3] Col. i. 12.
[4] Aug. i. 19, contr. Faustum. c. 11.
[5] Damasc. lib. 4, de fide orthodox. cap. 12; 1 Cor. 13. [6] 1 Cor. x. 16.

"seeketh not her own."[1] In this we are fortified by the concurrent testimony of St. Ambrose, who, explaining these words of the Psalmist, "I am a partaker with all them that fear thee,"[2] observes: "As we say that a member is partaker of the entire body, so are we partakers with all that fear God." Therefore has Christ taught us to say, *our*, not *my* bread;[3] and the other petitions of that admirable prayer are equally general, not confined to ourselves alone, but directed also to the general interest and the salvation of all.

A SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATION OF THIS COMMUNION

This communication of goods is often very aptly illustrated in Scripture by a comparison borrowed from the members of the human body. In the human body there are many members, but though many, they yet constitute but one body, in which each performs its own, not all the same, functions. All do not enjoy equal dignity, or discharge functions alike useful or honorable; nor does one propose to itself its own exclusive advantage, but that of the entire body.[4] Besides, they are so well organized and knit together that if one suffers, the rest naturally sympathize with it; and if, on the contrary, one enjoys health, the feeling of pleasure is common to all. The same may be observed of the Church. She is composed of various members, of different nations, — of Jews, Gentiles, freemen, and slaves, of rich and poor, — yet all, initiated by faith, constitute one body with Christ, who is their head. To each member of the Church is also assigned his own peculiar office; as some are appointed apostles, some teachers, but all for the common good, so to some it belongs to govern and teach, to others to be subject and to obey.

THIS COMMUNION HOW FAR COMMON TO THE WICKED

But the advantages of so many and such exalted blessings bestowed by Almighty God are pre-eminently enjoyed by those who lead a Christian life in charity, and are just and beloved of God; while the dead members, that is, those who are bound in the thraldom of sin and estranged from the grace of God, although not

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 5.
[2] in Ps. cxviii. serm. 8, v. 63.
[3] Matt. vi. 11.
[4] 1 Cor. xii. 14.

deprived of these advantages so as to cease to be members of this body, are yet, as dead members, deprived of the vivifying principle which is communicated to the just and pious Christian. However, as they are in the Church they are assisted in recovering lost grace and life by those who are animated by the Spirit of God, and they also enjoy those fruits which are no doubt denied to those entirely cut off from the communion of the Church.[1]

"GRACES GRATUITOUSLY GRANTED" COMMON TO THE WICKED WITH THE GOOD

But not only the gifts which justify and endear us to God are common. "Graces gratuitously granted," such as knowledge, prophecy, the gifts of tongues and of miracles, and others of the same sort,[2] are common also, and are granted even to the wicked, not, however, for their own but for the general good, for the building up of the Church of God. Thus, the gift of healing is given not for the sake of him who heals, but for the sake of him who is healed. In fine, every true Christian possesses nothing which he should not consider common to all others with himself, and should therefore be prepared promptly to relieve an indigent fellow creature; for he that is blessed with worldly goods, and sees his brother in want, and will not assist him, is at once convicted of not having the love of God within him.[3] Those, therefore, who belong to this holy communion, it is manifest, enjoy a certain degree of happiness here below, and may truly say with the Psalmist: "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. . . . Blessed are they who dwell in thy house, O Lord."[4]

Sermon

The Communion of Saints

"I believe in the Communion of Saints."

BY THE REV. STEPHEN MURPHY, O.M.I.

This text, taken from the Apostles' Creed, is an expression of the Catholic belief that the saints and friends of God have vital

[1] Aug. in Ps. 70, serm. 2.
[2] 1 Cor. xiii. 2.
[3] 1 John iii. 17.
[4] Ps. lxxxiii. 2, 3, 5.

interests in common. It is of Divine faith that things affecting one soul in its relation to sanctity and happiness have an intimate bearing on all souls that belong to the Kingdom of Christ. We Christians glory in a brotherhood whose membership transcends the narrow limits of this world. We claim as our fellow citizens and our brethren countless human beings dwelling in heaven, on earth, in purgatory, who are united by a mutual sympathy and friendship among themselves and by the common reliance they place in the goodness and favor of the Almighty.

I. Now all are called saints on earth who are sons abiding in the household of God. To be such they must be free from grievous sin. But freedom from sin and admission to the companionship of the saints, we may well recall, in the case of most men implies repentance for past misconduct and a determination of future amendment; just as it required the sorrow and tears of the returning prodigal to open once more to him the home of his youth and innocence. Whether, then, it be Baptism or penance that has made them the friends of God, the saints on earth are the living members of the Church Militant, whose essential qualification is innocence and holiness, and whose cherished possession is a common heritage of merit and atonement bequeathed to them by Christ in the shedding of His Precious Blood. The saints here below have in common the same means of grace and edification, enabling them to withstand with unfaltering countenance the dangerous allurements that threaten their peace of mind. They all partake of the Banquet of the Lord and are fed with the same Holy Bread of eternal life. Their common worship is the prayer and sacrifice of the universal Church offered up by the mediation of an Omnipotent Intercessor. It is the prayer of many hearts united with the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Their voices ascend to heaven as one voice and cry, beseeching the Father of mercies, that the days of His children on earth may be disposed in peace and that all may be numbered in the flock of the elect.

II. The saints in purgatory are those who suffer after death, but who have received from God, in the particular judgment, the certain assurance that they are saved. Their earthly existence for them is a thing of the past; but the combats they sustained

in the flesh and the temptations they encountered have left wounds and scars that were not entirely healed by the remedies applied of contrition and penance. Their condition, in dying, though not meriting everlasting punishment, nevertheless prevented their instant passage into paradise. And thus they are excluded for a time from heaven. They are the saints called the Church Suffering, because they remain in a place of purification until, by the grief and affliction they patiently endure, all wounds and traces of their earthly failings and imperfections are burnt and purged away.

But the good and the generous, when subjected to suffering, are peculiarly sensitive to the affliction of others. Hence the saints in purgatory are united in sorrow; and as their common grief at being kept far from God is so much the more penetrating, so likewise the compassion they feel for one another's distress is deeper and more overpowering than any we can experience in this world.

Nor does this mean that these afflicted souls are separated from the living. Rather, we must say, participation in the treasury of atonement, of which the living Church holds the keys, is more necessary for them; seeing that, in their prison and chains, they are powerless to help themselves. Though confined in purgatory, they retain a rightful share of the benefits dispensed in this world by the ministers of Christ. They are joined to their human brethren on earth by the recognition and expectancy of relief. We are able to lend them aid by offering to God, as atonement for their debt, our own prayers and other good works. What a consoling dogma of our religion that we can thus render assistance to deceased relatives and friends, our separation from whom by death we bitterly mourn! And we may be well assured of their gratitude and of their prayers in return if our charity, esteemed by God, hastens for them the glad hour of their deliverance from prison, when they shall be granted refreshment, light, and everlasting rest.

III. By far the most numerous branch of the Communion of Saints is formed of the blessed in heaven. From every tribe and tongue and people are they gathered before the face of God in the everlasting courts, where they participate in the all-absorbing

vision of things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. It is the Church Triumphant, the union in glory of souls washed in the Blood of the Lamb. It is the unspeakable happiness that the assembly of the elect enjoy when they possess God eternally as their reward exceedingly great.

Now, if there is an identity of interest among the faithful of this world, if likewise there is an intimate union and fellowship animating the suffering souls, then what shall we say of the union and fellowship that pervades and animates the inhabitants of the Holy City? Seeing that the heart of man was created for neither strife nor sorrow, but for happiness alone, and since rational beings instinctively seek companionship in enjoyment, thus in the abode of perfect rest, where no shadow of suffering threatens, each redeemed soul is united with his companions of glory, and the knowledge of his own individual blessedness is immeasurably increased by sharing in the blessedness of the unnumbered thousands that sing hymns of joy before the great white throne.

But even in their joy, supreme and everlasting as it is, the saints in paradise are not forgetful of their brethren in less happy spheres. How many among them retain a vivid memory of the chastening pains they lately endured, and which they know others still endure, as the nearer preparation for participation in the privileged Communion of the beatific vision! Further, in viewing the sacred wounds of the glorified humanity of Christ, are they not necessarily reminded of this world we dwell in? Are they not reminded that earth, and not heaven, was chosen by the Son of God for His mortal career in human flesh? And that, on this earth, He elected to suffer and to die to purchase for men so glorious a destiny? Is it possible for the elect to forget the abode where the foundations of their happiness were laid? Where God, for their benefit, manifested His bountiful Providence by miracles and revelations, by lessons of warning and promises of reward, by institutions of holiness and mercy? Where they themselves, sustained by Divine grace, were able to rejoice in the midst of tribulations and sorrows that appeared too heavy, too unbearable to all except to those who loved God and trusted in the power of His love?

Nay, more, this present world in its actual condition is revealed to the eyes of the blessed. They take a never-failing interest in the lives of existing men, because however poorly circumstanced we may be, they behold the true nobility we possess as children of God redeemed equally as they by the Precious Blood of Jesus. In our souls they see imaged the adorable likeness of our Maker. In us they recognize members of that Church whose riches are their enjoyment. And if their joy will be filled with greater rejoicing in the triumph of our salvation, then truly may we say that the saints are with us not only in mind, their hearts likewise accompany us, so to speak, in the battle we wage against the powers of darkness.

Their intercession with God is unceasing in our behalf, that through His mercy and goodness we may be made to persevere till the hour of victory and reward.

Practices. Let us now make some useful applications of our belief in the Communion of Saints. If we belong to the company of the just, then we are constrained to practise holiness. We are bound faithfully to fulfil our duties towards God and man. Still we shall show little generosity in so worthy a cause if we limit our endeavors to strict duty. We must therefore multiply our deeds of virtue that our example may be a shining light for the footsteps of our fellow Christians whose welfare is so closely connected with our own. Again, no person animated with a spirit of charity and true piety will fail to engage in special good works for the benefit of the suffering souls. Finally, let us pay due honor to the saints in paradise who are our friends nearest to God. Let us beg them to obtain from the Almighty this favor: that our lives may resemble theirs in goodness and fidelity in the service of religion, and that in dying we may be speedily admitted into the full participation of the celestial privileges of the Communion of Saints.

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SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

SUBJECT

THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

TEXT

There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. — JOHN ii. 1.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. The presence of our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the Apostles at this wedding feast in Cana, and the miracle which our Saviour worked on the occasion, are a proof of the great excellence and sanctity of marriage. It was at this time, indeed, according to some, that marriage was raised to the dignity of a Sacrament.

I. Marriage between Christians is a Sacrament. 1. From the beginning marriage was instituted by God as a natural **contract.** Thus Adam and Eve and the Patriarchs were truly married under the law of nature; Tobias and Sara and others, under the Law of Moses; and even to-day marriages between unbaptized persons, although not sacramental in character, are valid contracts. 2. Christ elevated marriage to the dignity of a **Sacrament.** As a mere contract marriage was ordained to the propagation of the human race, and the raising of children for God and society; but as a Sacrament it also sanctifies the parties and confers the special graces they need. 3. That matrimony is a true Sacrament has been the constant teaching of the Church and is the doctrine of St. Paul (Eph. v. 28). 4. In every Sacrament we have three things, — an outward sign, inward grace,

and institution by Christ. In Matrimony the outward sign is the natural contract expressed in words or signs; the inward grace is the supernatural help conferred on the parties, which enables them to bear the difficulties of their state and to perform their obligations towards each other and towards their children; the institution of marriage as a Sacrament by Christ we know from Scripture, tradition, and the positive teaching of the Church.

II. Christian marriage has the properties of unity and indissolubility. 1. The unity of marriage forbids polyandry and polygamy, because these are opposed to the ends and purposes of matrimony, and were forbidden by Christ Himself (Matt. xix. 4–6); the former is opposed to the primary end of marriage, the latter impedes the secondary ends. 2. The indissolubility of marriage forbids divorce. The bond of matrimony is dissolved only by death, according to the teachings of Christ and St. Paul; hence the Church does not recognize the right of those divorced by the State to marry again during the lifetime of either party. 3. The evils of polygamy are that it reduces woman to the condition of a slave, destroys peace and love in the family, and imperils the welfare of the children. Of this pagan and Mohammedan countries afford ample evidence. 4. The evils of divorce are: (a) that it is injurious to society, as destroying the principle of authority, promoting dissensions, encouraging sin and crime as a means to freedom, lowering the dignity of woman; (b) that it is injurious to the family, whose peace and stability it destroys; (c) that it is unjust to the wife and the children. The facility of divorce was one of the leading causes of the downfall of the Roman empire, and it is one of the chief menaces of modern society.

III. The advantages of Christian marriage. 1. The procreation and education of lawful offspring. The proper rearing of children not only secures the good of the Church and society in general, but also redounds to the welfare of the children and parents themselves. Race suicide, on the contrary, injures the parents, prevents or destroys human life, defrauds society of its

members, and robs heaven of immortal souls. 2. The second advantage of marriage consists in fidelity and mutual love and assistance. 3. The third advantage of Christian marriage is that it is an inseparable union, which makes the contracting of matrimony more serious, renders dissensions between the parties less frequent, and, in case of dissension, makes reconciliation more easy.

Conclusion. 1. Because of the sacredness of this Sacrament people should not receive it without previous instruction, sufficient deliberation, prayer, and counsel. 2. As matrimony is a sacrament of the living, the contracting parties should be in the state of grace; they should, if possible, make a general confession beforehand, go to Holy Communion, and be married with a nuptial mass. 3. Married people should always try to respect the dignity of the Sacrament they have received and be faithful to the duties and burdens it imposes. 4. Mixed marriages are to be entirely discouraged because of the evils to the family, the offspring, and the Church which arise from them.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part II

MATRIMONY AS A SACRAMENT, SUPERIOR TO THE NATURAL CONTRACT

The preceding (see Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost) are the instructions which the pastor will communicate to the faithful on the subject of marriage as a natural contract; as a sacrament he will show that marriage is raised to a superior order, and referred to a more exalted end. The original institution of marriage as a natural contract had for object the propagation of the human race; its subsequent elevation to the dignity of a sacrament is intended for the procreation and education of a people in the religion and worship of the true God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IT EXEMPLIFIES THE UNION OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

When the Redeemer would exemplify the close union that subsists between Him and His Church, and His boundless love

towards us, He declares this divine mystery principally by alluding to the holy union of man and wife; and the aptitude of the illustration is evinced by this, that of all human relations no one is so binding as that of marriage, and those who stand in that relation are united in the closest bonds of affection and love. Hence the Sacred Scriptures frequently place before us this divine union of Christ with His Church under the figure of a marriage.

MARRIAGE A SACRAMENT

That marriage is a sacrament has been at all times held by the Church as a certain and well ascertained truth; and in this she is supported by the authority of the Apostle in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "Husbands," says he, "should love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church; because we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ, and in the church."[1] When the Apostle says, "This is a great sacrament," he means, no doubt, to designate marriage;[2] as if he had said, The conjugal union between man and wife, of which God is the author, is a sacrament, that is, a sacred sign of the holy union that subsists between Christ and His Church. That this is the true meaning of his words is shown by the Holy Fathers who have interpreted the passage; and the Council of Trent has given to it the same interpretation.[3] The husband therefore is evidently compared by the Apostle to Christ, the wife to the Church;[4] "the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church";[5] and hence the husband should love his wife, and again, the wife should love and respect her husband, for "Christ loved his Church, and gave himself for her"; and the Church, as the same Apostle teaches, is subject to Christ.

[1] Eph. v. 28–31.

[2] Tertull. lib. de Monog.; Aug. de fide et oper. c. 7; lib. nupt. et concup. cc. 10, 12.

[3] Sess. 24. [4] Ambr. in epist. ad Ephes. [5] Eph. v. 23.

IT SIGNIFIES AND CONFERS GRACE

That this sacrament signifies and confers grace (and in this the nature of a sacrament principally consists) we learn from these words of the Council of Trent: "The grace which perfects that natural love, and confirms that indissoluble union, Christ himself, the author and finisher of the sacraments, has merited for us by his passion."[1] The faithful are therefore to be taught that, united in the bonds of mutual love, the husband and wife are enabled, by the grace of this sacrament, to repose in each other's affections, to reject every criminal attachment, to repel every inclination to unlawful intercourse, and in everything to preserve "marriage honorable . . . and the bed undefiled."[2]

ITS SUPERIORITY TO GENTILE AND JEWISH MARRIAGE

The great superiority of the Sacrament of Matrimony to those marriages which took place before or after the Law, we may learn from the following considerations: The Gentiles, it is true, looked upon marriage as something sacred, and therefore considered promiscuous intercourse to be inconsistent with the law of nature; they also held that fornication, adultery, and other licentious excesses should be repressed by legal sanctions, but their marriages had nothing whatever of the nature of a sacrament. Among the Jews the laws of marriage were observed with more religious fidelity, and their marriages, no doubt, were more holy. Having received the promise that in the seed of Abraham all nations should be blessed,[3] it was justly deemed a matter of great piety among them to beget children, the offspring of a chosen people, from whom, as to his human nature, Christ our Lord and Saviour was to descend; but their marriage also wanted the true nature of a sacrament.

A further confirmation of this is that whether we consider the law of nature after the fall of Adam, or the law given to Moses, we at once perceive that marriage had fallen from its primitive excellence and sanctity. Under the Law of Moses we find that many of the Patriarchs had several wives at the same time, and, should a cause exist, it was subsequently permitted to dismiss

[1] Sess. 24, de matrim. [2] Heb. xiii. 4. [3] Gen. xxii. 18.

one's wife, having given her a bill of divorce;[1] both of which abuses have been removed by the Gospel dispensation, and marriage restored to its primitive state.

POLYGAMY OPPOSED TO THE NATURE OF MARRIAGE

That polygamy is opposed to the nature of marriage is shown by our Lord in these words: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh." "Therefore," continues the Redeemer, "now they are not two, but one flesh."[2] The Patriarchs, who by the permission of God had a plurality of wives, are not on that account to be condemned. The words of the Redeemer, however, clearly show that marriage was instituted by God as the union of two only; and this he again expressly declares when he says: "Whoever shall put away his wife, . . . and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery."[3] If a plurality of wives be lawful, we can discover no more reason why he who marries a second wife while he retains the first should be said to be guilty of adultery, than he who, having dismissed the first, takes to himself a second. Hence, if an infidel, in accordance with the laws and customs of his country, has married several wives, the Church commands him, when converted to the faith, to look upon the first alone as his lawful wife, and to separate from the others.

MARRIAGE INDISSOLUBLE

That marriage cannot be dissolved by divorce is easily proved from the same testimony of our Lord. If by a bill of divorce the matrimonial link were dissolved, the wife might lawfully, and without the guilt of adultery, take another husband; yet our Lord expressly declares that "whosoever shall put away his wife, . . . and shall marry another, committeth adultery."[4] The bond of marriage, therefore, can be dissolved by death alone, and this the Apostle confirms when he says: "A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband die, she is at liberty: let her marry to whom she will; only in the Lord."

[1] Deut. xxiv. 1; Matt. xix. 7.
[2] Matt. xix. 5, 6.
[3] Matt. xix. 9.
[4] Matt. xix. 9; Luke xvi. 18.

And again: "To them that are married, not I, but the Lord commandeth, that the wife depart not from her husband. And if she depart, that she remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband."[1] Thus to her who has separated from her husband, even for a just cause, the only alternative left by the Apostle is to remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. The Church, unless influenced by very weighty causes, does not sanction the separation of husband and wife.

BENEFICIAL CONSEQUENCES OF ITS INDISSOLUBILITY

That this the law of marriage may not appear too rigorous, its beneficial consequences are to be presented to the consideration of the faithful.

In the first place, they should know that the choice of a companion for life should be influenced by virtue and congeniality of disposition, rather than by wealth or beauty,—a consideration which confessedly is of the highest practical importance to the interests of society.

Besides, if marriage were dissoluble by divorce, married persons could scarcely ever want causes of dissension, which the inveterate enemy of peace and virtue would never fail to supply; whereas, when the faithful reflect that although separated as to bed and board, they are still bound by the tie of marriage, and that all hope of a second marriage is cut off, they are more slow to anger and more averse to dissension; and if sometimes separated, feeling the many inconveniences that attend their separation, their reconciliation is easily accomplished through the intervention of friends. Here the salutary admonition of St. Augustine is also not to be omitted by the pastor, in order to convince the faithful that they should not deem it a hardship to be reconciled to their penitent wives, whom they may have put away for adultery. "Why," says he, "should not the Christian husband receive his wife, whom the Church receives? Why should not the wife pardon her adulterous but penitent husband, whom Christ has pardoned? When the Scriptures call him who keeps an adulteress 'a fool,'[2] it means an adulteress who after her delinquency refuses to repent, and perseveres in the career of turpi-

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 39; 10, 11. [2] Prov. xviii. 22.

tude which she had commenced."[1] In perfection and dignity it is clear, therefore, from what has been said, that marriage among the Jews and Gentiles is far inferior to Christian marriage.

THREE ADVANTAGES ARISING FROM MARRIAGE

The faithful are also to be informed that there are three advantages which arise from marriage, — offspring, faith, and the sacrament, — advantages which alleviate the evils pointed out by the Apostle when he says, "Such shall have tribulation of the flesh,"[2] and which render honorable[3] that intercourse which without marriage should be deservedly reprobated.

The first advantage, then, is that of legitimate offspring, — an advantage so highly appreciated by the Apostle that he says, The woman . . . "shall be saved through child-bearing."[4] These words of the Apostle are not, however, to be understood to refer solely to the procreation of children; they also refer to the discipline and education by which children are reared to piety, for the Apostle immediately adds, "if she continue in faith." "Hast thou children?" says Ecclesiasticus, "instruct them, and bow down their neck from their childhood."[5] The same important lesson is inculcated by the Apostle; and of such an education the Scripture affords the most beautiful illustrations in the persons of Tobias, Job, and of other persons eminent for sanctity. But the further development of the duties of parents and children we reserve for the exposition of the Fourth Commandment.

The next advantage is faith; not the habitual faith infused in Baptism, but the fidelity which the husband plights to the wife and the wife to the husband, to deliver to each other the mutual dominion of their persons, and to preserve inviolate the sacred engagements of marriage. This is an obvious inference from the words of Adam on receiving his consort Eve, which, as the Gospel informs us, the Redeemer has sanctioned by his approbation. "Wherefore," says our protoparent, "a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh."[6] Nor are the words of the Apostle less ex-

[1] Lib. de adult. conjug. cc. 6, 9.
[2] 1 Cor. vii. 28.
[3] See Aug. lib. 5, contr. Jul. cap. 5.
[4] 1 Tim. ii. 14, 15.
[5] Eccl. vii. 25.
[6] Gen. ii. 24; Matt. xix. 5.

plicit. "The wife," says he, "hath not power of her own body, but the husband."[1] Hence against adultery, because it violates this conjugal faith, the Almighty justly decreed in the Old Law the heaviest chastisements.[2] This matrimonial faith also demands, on the part of husband and wife, a singular, holy, and pure love, a love not such as that of adulterers, but such as that which Christ cherishes towards his Church. This is the model of conjugal love proposed by the Apostle when he says, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church."[3] The love of Christ for His Church was great, not an interested love, but a love which proposed to itself the sole happiness of his spouse.

The third advantage is called the *sacrament,* that is, the indissoluble tie of marriage. "The Lord," says the Apostle, "commandeth that the wife depart not from her husband. And if she depart, that she remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. And let not the husband put away his wife."[4] If, as a sacrament, marriage is significant of the union of Christ with His Church, it follows that as Christ never separates Himself from His Church, so a wife, as far as regards the tie of marriage, can never be separated from her husband.

Sermons

The Sacrament of Marriage

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

It is part of God's providence that when He sets before us an end to be attained He provides us also with the means of attaining that end. So in the case of marriage, having ordained it for the high purpose of preparing souls for heaven, God has endowed it with qualities which make it an apt instrument for the purpose for which it was instituted. These qualities are revealed in the truth of Christ and the Church. Christ's Church was to be one only, and it was to last until the end of time. The bond of Christian marriage must likewise be one only and must last until broken by death. Unity and perpetuity are the qualities which

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 4.
[2] Num. v. 12, etc.
[3] Eph. v. 25.
[4] 1 Cor. vii. 10.

make the marriage state specially fitted for the great object of bringing children into the world, of nourishing them in body, mind, and spirit, of bringing them to the final perfection for which man was created. If the bringing of children into the world is attended with great pain and labor, the bringing of their souls to perfection is attended with still greater pain and labor. It requires nothing else than the united life and love of both parents. Now such is the nature of man and woman that they cannot love effectually with a divided love. Let either partner give the other the slightest cause for jealousy and there is an end of that perfect love and harmony in the family which is so needful for the well-being of the children. The archetype of perfect love is the mutual love of the three persons of the blessed Trinity. One of the fairest created reflections of that love is the triple love of family life, the love of husband, wife, and child. It will brook no intrusion from without. It cannot bear the prospect of it coming to an end. This is a fundamental and universal law of nature, a law of nature which is accentuated, ennobled, and made perfect by a law of grace. The Sacrament of Matrimony implies a special divine sanction to the laws of unity and perpetuity in the marriage bond.

The need of the higher sanction and help is seen from the passing nature of the merely natural charms. The mere physical pleasures pass away with their satisfaction. Youthful ardor burns out before the mature part of life is reached. In the course of a life so intimate as that of husband and wife many faults of character become exposed. Marriage certainly brings a revelation of many new beauties of character, but it also brings a revelation of many faults of character. It is fraught with disappointments even as with agreeable surprise. The fading of bodily beauty also tends to weaken the natural bond. When the hair turns gray, and the eye loses its lustre, and the features fall into wrinkles; when the general buoyancy and ardor of youth tones down into the prose of middle age; then indeed is there need of something more sustaining, something more lasting than the mere tie of natural affection or natural contract. It is found in the unity and perpetuity of the Sacrament. The Sacrament imparts all the courage, the energy, the refreshment, and the love

needful to make the bond strong and lasting. It renews the youth of married life and makes it satisfying even in spite of years.

The Church claims to have the care of this Sacrament. The Church, therefore, has ever insisted on its unity and perpetuity. The Church regards the sin of adultery as something infinitely more heinous than any sin possible among the unmarried. The father who has to provide for his children must be certain that they are his own. He cares for them only on the supposition that they are his offspring. Any infidelity, therefore, on the part of the woman must of necessity tend to break up these sacred family relationships. A father cannot love and care for children who may be those of the man who has done him the greatest possible injury. And if a woman gives unswerving fidelity to her husband she has a right to claim an equal fidelity in return. Infidelity on the part of the man, although it does not act directly in rendering the offspring of the family uncertain, yet it strikes at the root of conjugal love, and thus almost directly at the foundations of family life. A violation of the sanctity of marriage then by either party is a double violation of God's law, a violation of chastity and a violation of justice. Hence, we have the most stringent laws against adultery, against polygamy, and against divorce.

Among the Jews the penalty of adultery was death by stoning. In the most savage races of the earth its punishment is immediate death. The law of Christ makes the law of nature and the law of Moses more perfect. This it does by all the conditions and rules which it lays down for the prevention of polygamy and divorce. By polygamy we usually understand the possession of two wives at the same time. The possession of two husbands at the same time is known as polyandry. Both are equally condemned by the Christian law. The cases of polygamy among the Jews are frequently quoted by those who want an excuse for disregarding the laws of Christian marriage. Attention must be paid to the circumstances of time and race. If polygamy was permitted, then it was for a special reason. And the permission was mere toleration. The circumstances of the times required that it should be permitted in order to avoid greater evils. Nevertheless, God did

not cease to give signs to His people as to what was the great ideal. The most wondrous love song ever sung by man was that inspired by the Holy Spirit, — the song of songs which tells of the love between one bridegroom and one bride, the love which lasts till death. "One is my dove, my perfect one is but one. . . . I to my beloved and my beloved to me, who feedest among the anemones. . . . Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell, the lamps thereof are fire and flames. . . . My beloved to me and I to him who feedeth among the lilies, till the day break and the shadows flee away." So the young Tobias could say to his wife Sara: "For we are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God." In praying to God for a blessing on his marriage he referred back to its original conditions: "Thou madest Adam of the slime of the earth, and gavest him Eve for a helper. And now Lord thou knowest that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister to wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which thy name may be blessed for ever and ever." And Sara prayed with him: "Have mercy on us, and let us grow old both together in health."

Further, the Church, although she insists that the marriage bond lasts only till death, although she allows remarriage after the death of one of the partners, yet she looks upon such remarriage as something less perfect. Her ideal is that a marriage should be so distinctly one and perpetual as to exclude any other marriage even after the first has been dissolved by death. A marriage is not merely a union of two in one flesh, but also of two in one spirit. The more perfect thing, therefore, would be to consider the bond of love lasting right through death. The reason why the Church allows remarriage after the death of one of the partners is because there are other ends of matrimony besides mutual love. To give expression to her wish, however, and to mark the distinction between the more perfect state and the less perfect state, the Church does not give the nuptial blessing in cases where the bride is a widow. She gives it where the bride is being married for the first time, even though the bridegroom be a widower. Having regard to the dignity of the bride, the Church in this case overlooks the defect in the bridegroom. Her

end is achieved by withholding the blessing only in the case of the marriage of widows. She wishes to hold up an ideal, to emphasize the unity and perpetuity of the bond.

This brings us to the all-important question of divorce. If both the natural and divine laws maintain the unity and perpetuity of the marriage bond, then no power on earth, not even the Church, has power to grant a divorce. "What, therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Here, on the threshold of the question, it is necessary to make a clear distinction of terms. When it is said that no power on earth can grant a divorce, divorce must be understood in a particular and strict sense of the word. Let us distinguish, then, between three kinds of separation. First, there is a separation which implies that the husband and wife are allowed to live apart. It is called in juridical language a judicial separation. It is called in theological language *separatio a mensa et thoro,* or separation from bed and board. Its meaning is that although the parties are separated from each other, yet they are not free to marry again. If they were allowed to marry again the separation would be said to be *a vinculo,* or separation from the bond. The actual contract or tie would be broken. Now the first kind of separation is allowed by the Church whenever there is a grave reason, such, for instance, as the misconduct of one of the parties. But the second kind the Church allows never. The bond which has been made by God may not be broken by man. One of the parties may forfeit certain rights of marriage through infidelity to the partner, but can never thereby acquire the freedom to marry again. And further, the Church makes no distinction in this respect between the innocent party and the guilty. A bond is a bond, the contract is a two-sided one, and, therefore, as long as the bond or contract remains it must bind both the parties. However unfair it may seem to the innocent party, yet it is God's law, and God will see to it that those who observe His law will, in the final balancing, receive their just reward.

Then there is another kind of separation which is frequently believed to be a divorce and which is a source of much perplexity to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. It is called a declaration of nullity. It means that that which has appeared to be a marriage

is declared never to have been a marriage from the beginning. The parties have gone through the ceremony, but there has been some obstruction in the way which has prevented the knot from being tied and so the supposed marriage must be declared null and void. Let us take an instance. A certain Jew married to a Baptist wife seeks for a divorce in the law courts. He is successful in his suit. Then he becomes a Catholic, falls in love with a Catholic girl, and wishes to be married to her in the Catholic Church. There is no difficulty, the Church approves of the marriage. What has happened? The undiscerning public think that the Church approved of divorce and of the remarriage of a divorced person. And if the man happens to have been a wealthy Jew the undiscerning public is not slow to attribute unworthy motives to the Church. But again, what has really happened? The Jew's first marriage was really no marriage at all in the sight of the Church. Before May, 1918, marriages between unbaptized persons and baptized heretics were null and void according to the law of the Church. The marriage between the Jew and the lady who had been baptized beforehand in the Baptist sect, having been contracted, as we are supposing, at a date anterior to May, 1918, manifestly fell under this annulling law. Therefore, the marriage, which, by the law of the land, was declared to be dissolved was by the law of the Church declared never to have existed, to have been null and void from the beginning. Consequently, when the Jew became a Catholic and received the Sacrament of Baptism he was quite free and capable of uniting himself with the partner of his choice.

Again, there are cases in history where the Church had sanctioned the dissolution of the actual bond of matrimony, the peculiar circumstances of which must be clearly understood. It can only take place when the marriage has been merely ratified and not consummated. That means that the church ceremony has been performed, but the two have not yet become one flesh. In such circumstances the Church teaches that either of the parties may enter religion and take a solemn vow of chastity. By a divine dispensation the solemn vow of chastity renders the marriage bond dissolved, and the party who does not take the vow is free to marry again.

Within these limitations the Church is absolutely inexorable against any attempt at separation from the bond. She has suffered the loss of whole nations from the faith rather than sacrifice one jot or tittle of her principle. The care of the Sacrament has been committed to her keeping, and to have condoned a denial of the sacramental nature of the matrimonial bond, even in one case, would have been to renounce the divine charge given to her. For the English-speaking world the Pope's firmness, in refusing to grant a divorce to Henry VIII, must ever be a monument of the fidelity of the Church to the sanctity of the marriage state. And the famous Encyclical of the illustrious Pope, Leo XIII, must ever remain the charter of woman's dignity and safety as to her marriage right. "The great evils," wrote the Pontiff, "of which divorce is the spring can hardly be enumerated. When the conjugal bond loses its immutability we may expect to see benevolence and affection destroyed between husband and wife; an encouragement given to infidelity; the protection and education of children rendered more difficult; the germs of discord sown between families; woman's dignity disowned; the danger for her of seeing herself forsaken, after having served as the instrument of man's passions. And as nothing ruins families and destroys the most powerful kingdoms like the corruption of manners, it is easy to see that divorce, which is only begotten of the depraved manners of a people, is the worst enemy of families and of States, and that it opens the door, as experience attests, to the most vicious habits, both in private and in public life."

Views subversive of the Catholic ideal are now very prevalent, and are becoming day by day more prevalent. In the matter of the sanctity of marriage, as in many other things, it is the Catholics who are the salt of the earth. While other religious bodies are prepared to give way under any specious pretext which may arise, the See of Peter proclaims the principle of no compromise. And when the Churches which ought to guard the sanctity of marriage show themselves weak and accommodating to the lower pleasures of man, we must not be surprised if non-religious bodies speak openly in favor of divorce and, all unashamed, make profession of free love. This, indeed, has come to pass. High

time is it then for Catholics to make their voice heard in protest. Nay, absolutely imperative is it that Catholics should rally themselves anew with even greater loyalty around the Holy Father who watches the marriage Sacrament so anxiously and sees its dangers so clearly. Legislation is made which may be irksome; but the irksomeness thereby suffered is trifling compared with the irksomeness thereby avoided. Let us admit boldly that the marriage state is fraught with difficulties, that love is liable to grow cold, that child-bearing is a burden, that the education of many children is a tax on the family's resources, that a drunken husband is an almost intolerable nuisance, that a gossiping wife is a plague of a life; let us admit all this, but at the same time insist that the Sacrament of Marriage has power either to prevent or mitigate the evils. It restrains the passions. But let the idea of divorce once get established and there is an end of restraint. The passions are let loose and fall victim to every little counter-attraction to family life. The half-hearted partner who realizes that there is an easy escape from the burden of married life makes no serious attempt to bear it. Then comes the sad spectacle of a mother left alone with a house full of children and no father to provide for them; or what is perhaps even more sad, a father with a house full of children and no mother to take care of them. The Church's laws may be hard to bear at times. They are, however, as the yoke of Christ, sweet and easy to bear if only we spread them out over the short run of life.

The Sanctity and Utility of Marriage

BY THE REV. P. HEHEL, S.J.

I. Matrimony is a holy thing, being a Sacrament. Virginity and widowhood are both excellent, but our Lord raised neither to this dignity, whereas He applied His sufferings and merits to Matrimony, as well as to Baptism and Confirmation, and gives a peculiar grace by means of the outward signs. It is no easy matter for two persons to live together, pledged never to part, and to take upon themselves the heavy responsibility of bringing up children. The special grace conveyed by this Sacrament enables married people to fulfil their duties towards each other and

towards their children. Marriage is undoubtedly a Sacrament, and it is called so not only by St. Paul, but also by the fathers.

St. Augustine says: "In the city of our God, on His holy mountain (i.e., in the Church), marriage is regarded not merely as an alliance, but also as a Sacrament."

St. Leo writes: "Union by marriage was from the beginning instituted in such a way as to contain within itself the Sacrament of Christ and His Church" (Epist. 92, c. 4).

The Council of Trent stated: "If anyone asserts that marriage is not truly one of the Sacraments of the evangelical law, instituted by Christ our Lord, or that it does not convey grace, let him be anathema" (Sess. 24, c. 1).

A Catholic regards marriage not so much as a natural union, but as a Sacrament, deriving its efficacy from the sufferings of Christ, and no less holy and worthy of respect than Baptism or any of the other Sacraments.

Marriage gains an additional sanctity from the fact that it typifies the union of Christ and the Church. He, the only-begotten Son of God, came forth from the Father into the world, being influenced by His love for His bride, the Catholic Church, whose beauty He beheld from all eternity, and, as St. Paul says, He delivered Himself up for the Church.

The Catholic Church consists of all baptized Christians who believe what Christ taught, make use of the means of grace that He instituted, and are in communion with His visible representative on earth. This vast association of all the faithful is described symbolically as a spotless maiden, united to our Lord by His incarnation and redemption. Our human nature is now united so closely with His Divine nature, that "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. v. 30).

This spiritual union of Christ and the Church is a type of Christian marriage. He left the Father and was united with the Church so as to form one body with her; and in the same way a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and they are two in one flesh. Christ founded but one Church, from which He can never be separated, and so a man can have but one wife, and their union is indissoluble.

The Church, through her union with Christ, became a fruitful

mother, bringing forth children in every age to people the kingdom of heaven; and in the same way Christian marriage is intended for the propagation of the race; but the children are to be brought up so as to complete the number of the elect, and be born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 13).

When therefore St. Paul calls marriage a great Sacrament, he means that it is a Sacrament typifying the union of Christ and His Church, and it is *great*, because it represents the greatest of all mysteries, the Incarnation of the Word.

God Himself instituted marriage in Paradise, and it must therefore be an honorable state, pleasing to Him. Under the old covenant it was regarded as a disgrace not to be married, and a woman who had no husband, or whose marriage was childless, believed herself to be abandoned by God. In the New Testament preference is given to virginity, but our Lord was far from despising marriage; indeed, recognizing it as an honorable condition, He sanctified the natural union by the gift of sacramental grace. Our Lady and St. Joseph were married people, and Christ was a guest at the marriage at Cana in Galilee and worked His first miracle there. The Apostles speak of marriage as a holy state instituted by God. St. Paul says that he will lay down no law for his converts on the subject of virginity, because a special vocation is required to this state, and whoever does not feel himself called to it, is advised to marry.

II. In the married state certain things are permissible which are otherwise forbidden; and there are three blessings peculiar to it, viz., children, conjugal fidelity, and the special grace conveyed by the Sacrament of holy Matrimony. We owe our existence to the marriage of our parents, and it is a great boon when a marriage is blessed with children. "A woman," says St. Paul, "shall be saved through child-bearing, if she continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety" (1 Tim. ii. 15). People have a very mistaken idea of marriage who complain of having children; and still worse are those who are ready to enjoy the privileges of married life but not its burdens.

The married state is, however, good and useful even when the blessing of children is denied by God, or when the man and

woman mutually agree to refrain altogether from conjugal intercourse. "In our marriages," says St. Augustine, "the sanctity of the Sacrament is more highly prized than its fecundity. Among all heathen nations the advantages of marriage are its right to produce children and conjugal fidelity; among the people of God there is the further advantage of the sanctity of the Sacrament."

There are many instances of married couples who have preserved their virginity; such were St. Henry the Emperor and his wife Cunigunde, Marcian and Pulcheria, Count Elzearius and Delphine, St. Julian and Basilissa.

The second blessing peculiar to the married state is conjugal fidelity. This implies that the two persons, united by the holy bond of matrimony, never abandon one another even in time of trouble, but hold fast one to the other in loyalty and love, having common interests and remaining true until death parts them. This they promise solemnly at the time of their marriage, when they stand before the priest, God's representative, and all the congregation. It is a great consolation for each to know that there is someone pledged to love and help them, in sickness and health, in joy and sorrow. In order to strengthen and preserve this bond, God has made marriage indissoluble; nothing can sever it, and whoever leaves wife or husband and attaches himself or herself to another is guilty of adultery.

The third great blessing conferred by marriage is the grace peculiar to the Sacrament of Matrimony. The matter is the mutual surrender of the body, which takes place at the moment when the man and woman declare that they there and then marry each other. Thenceforth, as St. Paul says: "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband. And in like manner the husband also hath not power of his own body, but the wife" (1 Cor. vii. 4). This surrender, made by one contracting party, must be accepted by the other, and each signifies assent, this assent being the form of the Sacrament. As soon as these words have been uttered in the presence of the priest and witnesses, the marriage is completed and the Sacrament has been received, in consequence of which the following special graces are bestowed upon the married couple: (1) Grace to possess their vessel in

sanctification and honor, as St. Paul expresses it (1 Thess. iv. 4), or, in other words, to avoid any breach of the marriage bond; (2) grace to love one another, as Christ loves the Church, so that they may be one in spirit and will, as well as in body; (3) grace to overcome the difficulties attendant upon living together and bringing up children.

The married state is, according to the Council of Trent, a holy thing, and must be treated as such; it must be kept holy in the begetting and rearing of children, in the preservation of conjugal fidelity, and in the use made of the graces which the Sacrament of Matrimony confers upon those who receive it worthily, and ask God for aid to do their duty.

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THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

SUBJECT

HELL

TEXT

The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. — MATT. viii. 12.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. Our Lord is contrasting in this Gospel the faith of the Gentile centurion with the obstinate unbelief of the Jews; and He says that the reward of the former shall be the possession of His Kingdom, while the latter shall receive as their portion the exterior darkness and pains of hell.

I. The meaning of hell. 1. Hell is the abode of fallen angels and of all human beings who have departed this life not in the state of grace. 2. There are two punishments of hell: a primary torment, which consists in the loss of God; and a secondary pain, which consists in mental and physical sufferings.

II. The twofold punishment of hell. 1. The pain of loss — They "shall be cast out into exterior darkness." As the lost have willingly separated themselves from God, so shall they be deprived of His presence. This means banishment from God's sight, exclusion from every happiness, loss of the one great good for which we were created and for which our nature yearns, separation from all the good we know and love here on earth. Coupled with all this is the bitter realization that the loss has been entirely through one's own fault, and that things might have been so different. Hence the damned will say: "Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us," etc. (Wis. v. 6 ff.). Illustrations: the void that follows the death of parents, children, relatives, and friends; the homesickness of an exile banished to foreign lands; the horror of a condemned criminal who realizes his doom; the gloom and sorrow that follow upon utter failure in life. 2. The pain of sense — "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This means that as the damned have given themselves inordinately to creatures, so shall they be afflicted by means of created things: (a) The fire prepared for the devil and his angels confines the damned within their loathsome prison and scourges and stings them unceasingly; (b) remorse of conscience, like a gnawing worm, torments the mind of the lost souls with thoughts of their wasted lives, their neglect of graces and opportunities, their horrible sins and black misdeeds; (c) the companions of the damned will be fierce devils and all the wicked of earth, such as murderers, thieves, and the like.

III. The eternity of hell. 1. This doctrine is denied nowadays by most non-Catholics, and yet hardly any teaching is more

clearly or more frequently asserted in Scripture (compare Isa. lxvi. 24; Dan. xii. 2; Eccl. xi. 3; Matt. xii. 31; xxv. 41, 46; Mark ix. 43; Luke xvi. 26). 2. It is fitting that hell should be eternal, — (a) because the guilt of the impenitent sinner is eternal; (b) because mortal sin is an offence against an infinite being; (c) because a temporary hell would not be a real deterrent; (d) even in this life the civil authority often inflicts an irrevocable punishment for certain crimes, e.g., life imprisonment or death.

Lessons. We should often meditate upon hell as a preservative against mortal sin and as a spur to faithfulness in God's service, or as an incentive to repentance and newness of life.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

(See Last Sunday after Pentecost, and Palm Sunday.)

Sermons

The Nature of Hell

BY THE RT. REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

In considering the nature of the pains of hell we shall take three points: I. The meaning and the fitness of the word "fire." II. The nature of the punishment itself. III. Its connection as to kind and degree with sin as its cause.

I. 1. Hell is usually described in Holy Scripture as fire. The various descriptions would suggest to us a volcano in full eruption, shaken to its base by earthquakes and peals of rolling thunder, overhung by massive clouds of smoke, pouring forth torrents of fiery lava that devour everything in their path. So we read, "Thou [O Lord] shalt make them as an oven of fire, in the time of Thy anger: The Lord shall trouble them in his wrath, and fire shall devour them" (Ps. xx. 10). "Topheth is prepared from yesterday, prepared by the king, deep, and wide. The nourishment thereof is fire and much wood: the breath of the Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindling it" (Isa. xxx. 33). "The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the ground

thereof into brimstone: and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. Night and day it shall not be quenched, the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste" (Isa. xxxiv. 9, 10).

And St. John says of antichrist "He . . . shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the sight of the holy angels, and in the sight of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever" (Apoc. xiv. 10, 11).

Almost all the references to hell are similar to these. Some have interpreted these expressions too literally, and so have either fallen into errors themselves, or have tried to discredit the doctrine of hell by giving it too material and gross an aspect. To picture hell as a real volcano, or a lake of real fire, would make it too objective. So hell would appear too much like the direct creation of God, and too little like the creation of man's own sin; the idea that hell is the immediate outcome and growth from sin, and even identical with sin, would be lost. We should lose sight of the fact that the kind and degree of suffering is exactly adapted to each man's sins and his precise measure of guilt. St. John Chrysostom cautions us of this danger. He blames the folly of those who dwell more on the sensible torments of hell than on the loss of God; and he says that the reflection of the soul on the loss of glory is more bitter than all the pains of sense. We must remember, then, that the expressions of Holy Scripture are to a considerable extent figurative, that the torments are in great measure subjective, within the sinner's self, and that the chief element in the true idea of hell is not the fire, but the loss of God.

2. Figurative and inadequate expressions are a matter of necessity in conveying Divine truths in human language. Eye hath not seen and the heart cannot conceive the things of God. Human ideas and human words both fall short of the reality; Divine facts have to be likened to earthly images that have fallen within our experience. This was especially the case with an Eastern people like the Jews, and the carnal-minded and materialistic. Abstract truths had to be conveyed to them in parables and figures. The loss of God's truth and beauty, the unsatisfied cravings of the soul after its natural end and its perfection, the pangs of remorse, would hardly have impressed the Jews. They needed images of

bodily pain, caused by natural agents, to give them any idea of hell. Outside Jerusalem was Gehenna, the valley of Hinnom, an accursed, abominable spot dedicated to the hideous worship of Moloch and Astarte. There were the horrible figures of the idols, the odor of blood and putrefaction, the fires and the brooding cloud of smoke, and the piercing shrieks of children burning to death. The sacred writers took this as the principal figure of hell.

Fire, although far from being an adequate comparison, is the most apt image for representing the wild fury of passion in the soul, the swift destruction of life and grace wrought by sin, the frightful ravages left behind it. Fire is a ruthless, irresistible, terrifying element; it is the very symbol of quick, piercing, agonizing pain. To express violent pain, disease, excitement, passion, sorrow, we always use the comparison of fire. We speak of burning anger, flaming fury, being consumed by the ardor of passion, on fire with desire. So too we speak of the sufferer, whatever the source of his afflictions, as being fried in the furnace of tribulation. Fire is the most apt expression for that state of sin and pain which exists in hell.

3. How far the word "fire" may be literally spoken of hell we have no means of judging. God has made no revelation; the Church has given no definition on the point. We are at liberty to interpret it as may seem best to each. We cannot explain it quite literally of fire such as we have on earth. That is a creation of God, beneficial, cheerful, intended for our use and comfort. The fire of hell has no beneficial qualities; it is not fed with fuel and liable to extinction, but is lighted and fed by sin and fanned by the breath of God's anger. The Fathers and spiritual writers tell us that earthly fire, however furious, is but a dead, lifeless image compared with the terrible reality of hell. That fire is of such a kind that it can torment spiritual beings, fallen angels, and human souls. St. Bernard would seem to make it wholly immaterial where he says, "Nothing burns in hell except our own self-will."

Yet though we know so little, and though that little is so conflicting as to the nature of the fire of hell, "we cannot doubt that there is some special and awful significance in the terms

which are so persistently applied in Scripture to hell." That there will be physical pain in hell (*poena sensus*) we know for certain, for the bodies of the lost will live again, and suffer with the souls after the last judgment. We are told also that God "will arm the creature for the revenge of his enemies" (Wisd. v. 18); and there would be special fitness in the employment of natural elements for the punishment of those who have sinned by their misuse or worship of material things.

Heat, or fire, is one of the great immaterial agents of God's work in the world. It is universal, most powerful, most various in its forms. It has often been used as the instrument of Divine wrath. Fire fell from heaven on the cities of the plain. Fire issued from the tabernacle and consumed the sacrilegious priests, Nadab and Abin. Fire rose from the earth and prevented the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem, which was undertaken in defiance of prophecy. Fire will destroy the earth at the last day. This was almost the only torture that our Lord did not endure in His Passion, and it has been suggested that this was because of fire being the special punishment of the lost in hell.

These considerations, however, pertain less to edification than to the satisfaction of curiosity. The practical tenet is, that there is a place of suffering hereafter, fearful in its intensity and of everlasting duration, and that no agony of pain and remorse in this life can be equal one moment to the flames of hell.

II. We have now to consider the nature of the different sufferings in hell. The texts about the torments of flame and the lake of fire, the pitch, the darkness, are more pictorial and, to the majority of men, more useful for conveying an idea of hell; but the text from Job seems to convey a truer though a more indefinite notion of it. "A land that is dark and covered with the mist of death: a land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth" (Job x. 21, 22). This points out rather the spiritual than the material aspect of hell; it suggests agony of mind and soul, the absence of God and of all that is good.

1. The primary thing in the sufferings of hell is the pain and loss, *poena damni*, a damnation properly so called. This may be said to be identical with mortal sin, rather than its consequence.

The first quality of mortal sin in this life is that it is mortal or death-dealing. It deprives the soul of supernatural life, which is the same as excluding it from that sphere of being of which God is the centre. So sin is itself death. So also it is separation from God: it is itself *pœna damni;* it is damnation, although here only incipient and not yet irreparable. In the next world it is the same. Mortal sin is death, only there it is eternal. It is separation from God, only there it is the complete loss of all the good that God has made; and besides, there is no mitigation of that supreme evil, and no distraction to prevent the mind from grasping the reality of its misfortune. Thus, in its essence, hell is not so much a special place, with special torments, specially created by God; but rather the state of sin, the state of separation from God, which the sinner has created for himself by his own act.

As God is the supreme good, the loss of God is the supreme evil, and involves all other evils. For evil is not a positive, created thing, but a negation, the absence of good. God is the light of truth, satisfying the intellect. Where He is not, there is a land of darkness, according to the passage from Job. God is transcendent life: apart from Him all is "covered with the mist of death." God is order, i.e., harmony and perfection, the condition of all goodness, beauty, virtue, enjoyment. Where there is "no order," there is every kind of evil. Disorder within and disorder around one, disorder intellectual and disorder physical and disorder moral, disorder in the body and all its functions, disorder in the tone and all its qualities and powers — what else is all this but "everlasting horror"?

The sinner is left to the self that he has chosen to serve, and self is always defilement, weariness, misery, and sin. Moreover, the self is not complete when alone and without God. It cannot stand alone; it requires some external support; it requires some object other than itself on which to employ its faculties. It has been created with an aptitude for God. God is its end; He is necessary for the completion of its being. There is a terrible void in the soul that is without God, an insatiable craving for the satisfaction of its powers; yet there is an intense repulsion, the result of sin, against Him who alone can satisfy the soul.

Recall the absolute ruin of life that is so often caused by the loss of the chief object of life, or of some faculty, or by some change of circumstances. The loss of a wife, of an only child, on whom all a man's affection has been poured out, the loss of fortune, or the loss of the occupation in which all his life has been passed, even the privation of light and companionship in a solitary dungeon — such cases as these wreck all happiness, all energy, even reason and life itself. Now, the loss of God is the loss of everything at once. A distinguished writer lately dead describes the state of the lost thus: It is "an abiding consciousness of having missed the aim of life, a loss of all that the heart before clung to; an absolute impotence and want of energy, because all the powers of life are withdrawn, and the will is now empty and unfruitful, and only fixed on evil; the constant burning of unsatisfied passions, and the gnawing pain of a conscience which cannot again be laid to sleep." The sinner is deprived of the essential Being, Truth, Beauty, which is God; and nothing is left but the nothingness of sin, with the vivid consciousness of it, and imperishable existence.

2. The pain of sense, which is more particularly represented by the term "fire," is the accompaniment and immediate consequence of the pain of loss. The primary harmony, i.e., subordination and union with God, is the source of all other harmony in our lives. If this is destroyed, there arises the utmost disorder in every subordinate department. One single sin is a centre of corruption, which is capable of extending far beyond its original point and tainting the whole of our being. Its chief effects are spiritual, but it has physical effects as well. The body is closely connected with the soul; it is the instrument of the soul in carrying out its evil determinations; the sensual impulses of the body lead the immaterial soul into sin. The character of each is impressed on the other. Purely mental sins, conceit, arrogance, hatred, cruelty, lust, express themselves in the lineaments of the face, the tone of voice, the general bearing of the body. Intensity of passion will disorganize the bodily functions, the digestion and sleep, the nerves, the blood, and the brain. And when the sin has taken external form it produces still more destructive effects on the body. The sin of Adam was chiefly of the soul, — dis-

belief, disobedience, and an exalting of himself against God,— but its effects were not merely mental, obscuring the intellect and weakening the will; there was also the indulgence of the carnal and lower nature against the spiritual: that good order of the body which ensured it against disease and death was destroyed, and the mastery over external nature was lost. In hell, similarly, the effect of any mortal sin will be to disorganize the whole soul by the withdrawal of God, and then the body. There will be a wild flaming up of all the passions. We can only picture to ourselves such as we know here: rebellion against an irresistible fate; hatred of God, of self, and all others; fear, anxiety, baffled effort, disappointment of all hopes, vain desire, humiliation, despair, disgrace. We can imagine to ourselves what the effect would be here on the bodily frame and on health. How much comfort, peace, enjoyment could exist in this turmoil of disorder? Disorder of this kind, even as it exists on earth, would be spoken of by us as a raging fire of passion, or even as hell-fire. In the next world this kind of suffering will be intensified indefinitely both in mind and body. This is the pain of sense. This may well be described as "fire," whatever other dread significance the void may contain.

3. Another class of suffering is the worm that dieth not. This is a figure for conscience and remorse, for memory and anticipation. It is not a different form of suffering; it is only the reflex action of the mind on its actual sufferings; but it will be so great an aggravation as to amount almost to a new sense of pain. This is an accompaniment of human suffering that is more bitter than the physical pain itself. In many cases this reflection or brooding so magnifies the suffering as to make it seem unendurable, when in reality it is well within the limits of our endurance. This is a self-inflicted pain, or rather rises from our natural faculties. The faculty of reflection is available both for pleasure and for pain; it is we ourselves who determine by our deeds the direction in which it shall be exercised.

This suffering is indicated by the word of Abraham to Dives in the parable: "Son, remember." And what is the sinner to remember? That he has lost God, that he has lost all things, all good, all happiness, and for all eternity. That he has lost God

for so little. What has he gained? A little honor, a little revenge, a little satisfaction, a little wealth, which has slipped through his hands, and is as if it had never been. That he has spent so much valuable time, so much energy on such worthless things — time and energy enough, differently applied, to have purchased eternal happiness. That it was so easy to have saved his soul: so little was demanded by God in the way of prayer, endurance, mortification, as compared with the horrible woe of hell; grace was so abundant, God so ready to help him. So many others whom he knew, and perhaps despised, have saved their souls, and he with all his wisdom has committed the grossest folly.

There will be bitterness of deepest remorse, but it will not be saving contrition, it will not be hatred of sin. The lost will be conscious of their utter impotence, but it will not be submission to God. They will curse the misery of their fate, but they will have no desire for God; they will feel the want of Him, but they will never turn to Him.

III. The sufferings of hell as to their kind and their degree are caused and are measured by each one's particular sins. This is the third point that comes before us in considering the nature of the pains of hell. We have to see that the punishment is exactly adequate to the sin, and that it is in no way excessive. Many of the difficulties felt about hell turn on this point. As hell is sometimes presented, it might seem as if there was the same punishment for all sinners, the same loss of God, the same torment of the lake of fire, the same intolerable misery; and yet it is apparent that no two men are exactly alike in guilt, and that the difference between the most guilty and the least guilty must be enormous. And again it might seem as if punishments so terrible and so enduring are out of proportion with sins, which last but a short time and may have some minimizing circumstances.

1. But Divine is not like human justice that it should err. The Divine punishments can take exact account of the guilt and of the excuses for sin. Though there may be a certain identity in the punishments of different sinners, as in the rewards of different saints, yet they vary as justice demands in each case. In

heaven there is the sight of God for all alike, yet "star differeth from star in glory" (1 Cor. xv. 41). The measure of the difference is in each one's capacity for glory, as determined by his life and merits on earth. Similarly in hell: each sin has created more or less disorder in each soul, and therefore more or less capacity for suffering. According to the number of sins, their grievousness, and the grace accorded by God, the punishment will be greater or less. "That servant who knew the will of his lord, . . . and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke xii. 47, 48).

2. The cause and the condemnation pronounced on the sinner, are rather from his sin than from God. "Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in me" (Osee xiii. 9). It is the sin itself that separates from God and inflicts supernatural death, of its own nature, and apart from a special sentence of God; and so, too, in the next life. The sentence of God and His curse are the same as that pronounced on Ephraim: "Ephraim is a partaker with idols, let him alone" (Osee iv. 17). God does not curse; with Him there is only blessing. Essential evil, such as is hell, is not from God; He is the source of good only, or of those evils, improperly so called, like afflictions, which are for our ultimate good. All that God does is to gather up these gifts which man refuses and tramples on, and to withdraw Himself when man has rejected Him. His curse is rather a declaration of the evil which the sinner has inflicted on himself, and an acceptance of the separation which the sinner has decreed. So it was with Adam. Before God had cast him out of Paradise he had shrunk from His presence and hidden himself, passing sentence of separation on himself.

3. Holy Scripture shows us how punishment follows the nature of the faculty abused and the gratification enjoyed. "By what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented" (Wisd. xi. 17). And again, "Thou hast also greatly tormented them who in their life have lived foolishly and unjustly, by the same things which they worshipped" (Wis. xii. 23). It is the same as on earth, where different sins — intemperance, pride, sensuality, dishonesty, falsehood — traduce, each its own specific

effect on the character, its own special disorder or punishment on mind and body. The rich man of the parable was tormented with a burning thirst for his gluttony, and with the garment of flame for his purple and fine linen. In this there will be not only exactness of punishment but a special bitterness, as the sinner realizes that he is caught in the snares he has himself laid, that he has digged a pit and fallen into it himself, that he has sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind, that his own deeds have recoiled on his head, and that his undue love of enjoyment has wrought his eternal misery. In all this there is no excess, for effects do not exceed their causes; the force applied and the result obtained must correspond accurately; the evil consequence of sin will be exactly determined by the faculty which has sinned and the amount of malice in the action.

4. The loss of God is an infinite punishment, yet it is not out of proportion to sin; for man's will can resist even God the Almighty; and the finite act of man is in a sense infinite as being a rejection of the Infinite, and a perseverance for ever in that rejection.

The loss of God is indeed the same in all the condemned, yet even this may be a different punishment to different men, as being differently realized by each according to his transgression.

5. As the punishment of hell varies for each one, as the realization of the loss of God depends on previous knowledge and guilt, there will evidently be some on whom the punishment of hell will fall very lightly. There are some, such as unbaptized children, savages, and possibly other adults (Balmez), who are not qualified for the supernatural vision of God, but who have never deliberately averted their will from Him. Such lose God indeed supernaturally, and it is an infinite loss; but no injustice is done to them thereby, for this supernatural possession of God is beyond all claims, requirements, and even beyond the ideas and desires of men in the state of merely natural endowments. Such souls are supernaturally dead; they are in the state of the loss of God, or of damnation; but in another sense they may be said to be saved. They are saved from the hell of conscious woe or loss; they may possess God by natural knowledge and love, and so do not suffer from entire loss of God or damnation.

St. Thomas Aquinas says of such: "They are joined to God by their participation in natural good; and thus they are able to enjoy Him by a natural knowledge and love." (See F. Coleridge, S.J., "The Sermon on the Mount." Chapter, "The Narrow Gate.")

From the foregoing reflections we should learn how great is the enormity of sin which produces as its fruit the loss of God and the terrible evils thence resulting. We should learn also that our sins will certainly find us out in the long run, and work their terrible effects upon us, unless we prove ourselves worthy of God's grace. It is an incredible folly for men to barter their eternal happiness and run the risk of endless misery for the sake of some poor transitory pleasure. Let the fear of hell lead us to a hatred of sin and this will conduct us to the love of God.

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FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

SUBJECT

GOD THE ALMIGHTY CREATOR

TEXT

The winds and the sea obey him. — MATT. viii. 27.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. The disciples with our Lord, as the Gospel tells us, were overtaken by one of those sudden and violent

storms that frequently occur on the lake of Genesereth. The Saviour was asleep, and to the human eyes of the disciples it seemed that all must surely perish. In terror they aroused the Master. With one word of command He stilled the raging waves and wind, giving another instance of His absolute control of creation and all its elements, which, as the Almighty Creator, was easy and natural to Him.

I. "I believe in God, the Father Almighty." 1. The majesty of God is most often designated by the term "Almighty." 2. God can do all things which do not involve a contradiction. Compare the weakness of man with the power of God. 3. The Creed speaks only of "omnipotence" among the attributes of God, because an acknowledgment of this attribute disposes us to admit the wondrous mysteries that follow in the Creed, and because it is the attribute most easily apprehended by the average intellect. 4. The Creed attributes omnipotence to the Father only, because He is the principle of the other Divine Persons. The Son and the Holy Ghost may also be called Almighty, since they are equal in all things to the Father.

II. "Creator of heaven and earth." 1. God formed the universe out of nothing. 2. God created the universe not from necessity, or to increase His own happiness, but out of goodness, in order to communicate something of His perfections to creatures. 3. God made not only the heavens and the earth, i.e., the firmament and the heavenly bodies, the mountains, valleys, seas, continents, etc., but also every living thing, — plants, animals, men, and angels; in a word, He made all things, visible and invisible. 4. Creation took place not in eternity, but in time; hence the world is temporal, not eternal.

Conclusion. 1. The thought of God's omnipotence should inspire us with great confidence when seeking to obtain any favor through prayer. Example, the incident in to-day's Gospel, when at the prayer of the disciples the winds and the waves were stilled. 2. Contemplation of the beauty, harmony, and variety of God's creation should increase our faith and lead us to glorify

our Creator in His wondrous works. Everywhere in nature we see traces of the divine Artisan.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article I of the Creed

WHY THE POWER AND MAJESTY OF GOD ARE DESIGNATED BY MANY NAMES IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURES; THAT OF ALMIGHTY MOST FREQUENT

Almighty. The Sacred Scriptures, in order to mark the piety and devotion with which the God of holiness is to be adored, usually express His supreme power and infinite majesty in a variety of ways; but the pastor should impress particularly on the minds of the faithful that the attribute of *omnipotence* is that by which He is most frequently designated. Thus He says of Himself, "I am the Almighty God";[1] and again, Jacob when sending his sons to Joseph thus prayed for them, "May my almighty God make him favorable to you."[2] In the Apocalypse also it is written, "The Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty";[3] and in another place the last day is called the "day of the Almighty God."[4] Sometimes the same attribute is expressed in many words; thus: "No word shall be impossible with God":[5] "Is the hand of the Lord unable?"[6] "Thy power is at hand when thou wilt."[7]

ITS MEANING

Many other passages of the same import might be adduced, all of which convey the same idea, which is clearly comprehended under this single word "Almighty." By it we understand that there neither is nor can be imagined anything which God cannot do; for not only can He annihilate all created things, and in a moment summon from nothing into existence many other worlds, — an exercise of power which, however great, comes in some degree within our comprehension, — but He can do many things still greater, of which the human mind can form no conception.

[1] Gen. xvii. 1. [2] Gen. xliii. 14. [3] Apoc. i. 8. [4] Apoc. xvi. 14.
[5] Luke i. 37. [6] Num. xi. 23. [7] Wisd. xii. 18.

But though God can do all things, yet He cannot lie or deceive or be deceived; He cannot sin or be ignorant of anything or cease to exist. These things are compatible with those beings only whose actions are imperfect, but are entirely incompatible with the nature of God, whose acts are all-perfect. To be capable of these things is a proof of weakness, not of supreme and infinite power, the peculiar attribute of God. Thus, while we believe God to be omnipotent, we exclude from Him whatever is not intimately connected, and entirely consistent with the perfection of His nature.

OMNIPOTENCE, WHY THE ONLY ATTRIBUTE OF GOD MENTIONED IN THE CREED

But the pastor should point out the propriety and wisdom of having omitted all other names of God in the Creed, and of having proposed to us that alone of "Almighty" as the object of our belief. For by acknowledging God to be omnipotent, we also of necessity acknowledge Him to be omniscient, and to hold all things in subjection to His supreme authority and dominion. When we doubt not that He is omnipotent, we must be also convinced of everything else regarding Him, the absence of which would render His omnipotence altogether unintelligible.

Besides, nothing tends more to confirm our faith and animate our hope than a deep conviction that all things are possible to God; for whatever may be afterwards proposed as an object of faith, however great, however wonderful, however raised above the natural order, is easily and at once believed when the mind is already imbued with the knowledge of the omnipotence of God. Nay more, the greater the truths which the divine oracles announce, the more willingly does the mind deem them worthy of belief; and should we expect any favor from heaven, we are not discouraged by the greatness of the desired benefit, but are cheered and confirmed by frequently considering that there is nothing which an omnipotent God cannot effect.

NECESSITY OF FAITH IN GOD ALMIGHTY

With this faith, then, we should be specially fortified whenever we are required to render any extraordinary service to our

neighbor or seek to obtain by prayer any favor from God. Its necessity in the one case we learn from the Redeemer Himself, who, when rebuking the incredulity of the Apostles, said to them, "If you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you shall say to this mountain: Remove from hence thither, and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible to you";[1] and in the other, from these words of St. James: "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."[2]

This faith brings with it also many advantages. It forms us, in the first place, to all humility and lowliness of mind, according to these words of the Prince of the Apostles: "Be you humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God."[3] It also teaches us not to fear where there is no cause of fear, but to fear God alone,[4] in whose power we ourselves and all that we have are placed;[5] for our Saviour says, "I will show you whom you shall fear: fear ye him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell."[6] This faith is also useful to enable us to know and exalt the infinite mercies of God towards us. He who reflects on the omnipotence of God, cannot be so ungrateful as not frequently to exclaim, "He that is mighty, hath done great things to me."[7]

NOT THREE ALMIGHTIES BUT ONE ALMIGHTY

When, however, in this Article we call the Father "Almighty," let no person be led into the error of excluding, therefore, from its participation the Son and the Holy Ghost. As we say the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God; so in like manner we confess that the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty, and yet there are not three Almighties but one Almighty. The Father, in particular, we call Almighty, because He is the source of all being; as we also attribute wisdom to the Son, because the eternal Word of the Father; and goodness to the Holy Ghost, because the love of both. These,

[1] Matt. xvii. 19. [2] James i. 6, 7. [3] 1 Pet. v. 6.
[4] Ps. xxxii. 8; xxiii. 10. [5] Wisd. vii. 16. [6] Luke xii. 5.
[7] Luke i. 49.

however, and such appellations, may be given indiscriminately to the three Persons, according to the rule of Catholic faith.

FROM WHAT, HOW, AND WHY GOD MADE THE WORLD

Creator of Heaven and Earth. The necessity of having previously imparted to the faithful a knowledge of the omnipotence of God will appear from what we are now about to explain with regard to the creation of the world. For when we are convinced of the omnipotence of the Creator, we more readily believe the wondrous production of so stupendous a work. For God formed the world not from materials of any sort, but created it from nothing, and that not by constraint or necessity, but spontaneously, and of His own free will. Nor was He impelled to create by any other cause than a desire to communicate to creatures the riches of His bounty; for essentially happy in Himself, He stands not in need of anything; as David expresses it: "I have said to the Lord, thou art my God, for thou hast no need of my goods."[1] But as, influenced by His own goodness, "he hath done all things whatsoever he would,"[2] so in the work of the creation He followed no external form or model, but contemplating, and as it were imitating, the universal model contained in the divine intelligence, the supreme Architect, with infinite wisdom and power — attributes peculiar to the Divinity — created all things in the beginning: "he spoke and they were made: he commanded and they were created."[3] The words "heaven" and "earth" include all things which the heavens and the earth contain; for besides the heavens, which the Prophet David called the works of His fingers,[4] He also gave to the sun its brilliancy, and to the moon and stars their beauty; and that they may be "for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years,"[5] He so ordered the celestial bodies in a certain and uniform course, that nothing varies more than their continual revolution, yet nothing is more fixed than that variety.

CREATION OF ANGELS

Moreover, He created from nothing spiritual nature, and angels innumerable to serve and minister to Him; and these He replen-

[1] Ps. xv. 2. [2] Ps. cxiii. 3. [3] Ps. xxxii. 9; cxlviii. 5.
[4] Ps. viii. 4. [5] Gen. i. 14.

ished and adorned with the admirable gifts of His grace and power.

That the devil and his associates, the rebel angels, were gifted at their creation with grace, clearly follows from these words of the Sacred Scriptures: "He [the devil] stood not in the truth";[1] on which subject St. Augustine says, "In creating the angels he endowed them with good will, that is, with pure love, by which they adhere to him, at once giving them existence, and adorning them with grace."[2] Hence we are to believe that the holy angels were never without "good will," that is, the love of God. As to their knowledge we have this testimony of Holy Scripture: "Thou, my lord, O king, art wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to understand all things upon earth."[3] Finally, David ascribes power to them, saying that they are "mighty in strength, and execute his word";[4] and on this account they are often called in Scripture the "powers" and "the hosts of heaven."

THEIR FALL

But although they were all endowed with celestial gifts, very many rebelled against God, their Father and Creator, were in punishment hurled from the mansions of bliss, and shut up in the dark dungeons of hell, there to suffer for eternity the punishment of their pride. Speaking of them the Prince of the Apostle says: "God spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, into torments, to be reserved unto judgment."[5]

CREATION OF THE EARTH

The earth also God commanded to stand in the midst of the world, rooted in its own foundation, and made "the mountains ascend, and the plains descend into the place" which He had founded for them. That the waters should not inundate the earth, He hath "set a bound which they shall not pass over; neither shall they return to cover the earth."[6] He next not only clothed and adorned it with trees, and every variety of herb and

[1] John viii. 44.
[2] Aug. lib. 12, de Civit. Dei, cap. 9.
[3] 2 Kings xiv. 20.
[4] Ps. cii. 20.
[5] 2 Pet. ii. 4.
[6] Ps. ciii. 8, 9.

flower, but filled it, as He had already filled the air and water, with innumerable sorts of living creatures.

CREATION OF MAN

Lastly, He formed man from the slime of the earth, immortal and impassible, not, however, by the strength of nature, but by the bounty of God. Man's soul He created to His own image and likeness; gifted him with free will, and tempered all his motions and appetites, so as to subject them, at all times, to the dictates of reason. He then added the invaluable gift of original righteousness, and next gave him dominion over all other animals. By referring to the sacred history of Genesis the pastor will make himself familiar with these things for the instruction of the faithful.

GOD THE CREATOR OF ALL

What we have said, then, of the creation of the universe is to be understood as conveyed by the words "heaven" and "earth," and is thus briefly set forth by the Prophet: "Thine are the heavens, and thine is the earth: the world and the fulness thereof thou hast founded";[1] and still more briefly by the Fathers of the Council of Nice, who added in their Creed these words: "of all things visible and invisible." Whatever exists in the universe, and was created by God, either falls under the senses and is included in the word "visible," or is an object of perception to the mind and is expressed by the word "invisible."

THE PRESERVER AND GOVERNOR

We are not, however, to understand that the works of God when once created could continue to exist unsupported by his omnipotence. As they derive existence from his supreme power, wisdom, and goodness, so unless preserved continually by his superintending providence, and by the same power which produced them, they should instantly return into their original nothingness. This the Scriptures declare when they say, "How could anything endure, if thou wouldst not? or be preserved, if not called by thee?"[2] Not only does God protect and

[1] Ps. lxxxviii. 12. [2] Wis. xi. 26.

govern all things by His providence, but also by an internal power He impels to motion and action whatever moves and acts, and this in such a manner that, although He excludes not, He yet precedes the agency of secondary causes. His invisible influence extends to all things, and as the wise man says, reaches "from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly."[1] This is the reason why the Apostle, announcing to the Athenians the God whom not knowing they adored, said, "He is not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and are."[2]

CREATION, THE WORK OF THE THREE PERSONS

Let so much suffice for the explanation of the first Article of the Creed. It may not be superfluous, however, to add that creation is the common work of the three Persons of the Holy and undivided Trinity, — of the Father, whom according to the doctrine of the Apostles we here declare to be "Creator of heaven and earth"; of the Son, of whom the Scripture says, "all things were made by him";[3] and of the Holy Ghost, of whom it is written, "The spirit of God moved over the waters,"[4] and again, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were established; and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth."[5]

Sermons

God the Father and Creator

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

The first article of the Creed is the first article of our morals. We profess our belief in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. We thereby imply that we have an obligation of acknowledging ourselves the creatures of God, of living and acting as children and subjects of God, of rendering to God our supreme homage, worship, obedience, and service. That truth is written both in the hearts of men and in the revealed book of God. By neglecting either of these sources of information, confused, inadequate, and even false ideas concerning the relationship between Creator and

[1] Wis. viii. 1. [2] Acts xvii. 27, 28. [3] John i. 3.
[4] Gen. i. 2. [5] Ps. xxxii. 6.

creature arise. Let us then try to look at this truth from the two points of view. Let us first consult human reason and experience and see how our nature demands the truth of God the Creator; and then let us consult the revealed word of God and see how fully that demand is satisfied.

One of the first instincts of our nature is our sense of dependence on one another. The words "dependence," "independence," and "freedom" have been used with varying significations. Man, along with his sense of dependence on another, has a sense of the need of freedom. The exaggeration of these two needs has led to errors in both directions. The exaggeration of the "dependence" notion has led to tyranny and slavery. The exaggeration of the "freedom" notion has led to license and rebellion. There is a golden mean between the two. There is a dependence on lawful authority which is the guarantee of the most perfect freedom. This is the true instinct which man feels.

A man's life history is a gradual learning of this fact. He is born a helpless infant. All he can do is to experience his simple needs and cry about them. He could not live for a day were it not that the kindly hands of his mother kept him folded to her breast and controlled his constantly erring ways. His education consists of one long series of alternate mistakes and corrections. His dependence on others is maintained right until the end of life. Nay, as he approaches the end of life his dependence on others increases more and more. When he is younger he may gird himself and walk where he will; but when he is old another must gird him and lead him whither he will not.

This sense of dependence felt so keenly in the social affairs of life becomes accentuated immensly when one considers the higher issues: our beginning and our end; our powers of doing good and evil. We feel instinctively that we did not make ourselves and that we do not belong to ourselves. Then our reason sets to work to justify our feeling. We argue back from effect to cause until at last we must come to the Being who is the First Cause of all things. Things cannot make themselves. Neither can there be a long endless chain of them with no beginning. Neither do we escape the difficulty by saying that we do not

know our origin. The mind can only find rest in the same truth in which the whole human spirit finds rest, in the truth of our God who is Maker of heaven and earth.

The act by virtue of which God brought the world into existence is a great mystery and quite beyond our imagination. The human mind, however, has made various attempts to express the nature of this act. Thus the symbol of "parent" has always been the first attempt to represent the divine causality. The first link in the chain of thought by which we go back from ourselves to the beginning of things is the link between father and son. Our first conception, therefore, of the great Being who was the author of our being is that of a father: I believe in God the Father Almighty.

Alongside the notion of fatherhood there is the notion of the intelligent workman. The work of the great God was manifestly one of vast genius. The artist who modeled in clay was a fitting symbol of the skill required for shaping the sun, moon, and stars; the land and the sea; the green herb, and cattle, and man. And so we have a synthesis made expressing fatherhood and makership: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

Yet even this expression was crude as a representation of God's creative act. Accordingly the most spiritual faculty of man was chosen, his will. This was made the final symbol of God's creative act. "Thou hast created all things; and for thy will (*propter voluntatem tuam*) they were, and have been created." By the simple nod of God's will things are produced out of nothing. *Fiat lux: et facta est lux:* "Let there be light and there was light." Thus, although there are so many proofs from reason of God the Creator of all things, the proof which touches nearest to the truth and which gives most of the truth, is the proof from human conscience; for it is conscience which tells us what is moral goodness and is thus the most perfect image we possess of Divine Goodness. It is by the voice of conscience that we hear most distinctly the voice of the Holy Spirit: "Know ye that the Lord he is God: he made us and not we ourselves."

Turning to the pages of Holy Writ we strike new and rich sources of knowledge concerning creation. First we are told

of creation in time. The greatest of pagan philosophers held that matter was eternal. St. Thomas, probably out of respect for Aristotle, taught that eternal creation was not intrinsically impossible. Theologians are divided with regard to this speculation. We know, however, from divine revelation, that the world was not eternal. "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." God's internal activity had gone on through all ages producing the three Divine Persons. Then the divine will sought an external object for its activity. First it produced a world of angels. They had a system of laws of their own; and though many interesting facts concerning them have been revealed to us, their manner of life and action is beyond our understanding. Then the divine activity produced our material world. Finally God combined a material and spiritual world in one creation, man; and with man created the world of supernatural grace, raising man to the higher plane of union with God.

Secondly, we are told of the order of creation. Various interpretations have been given to the opening chapters of the book of Genesis. A very plausible explanation is what is known as the "vision theory." A vision may be seen either of present or of future or of past events. In the case of creation the sacred writer would, as it were, look backwards. His description need not correspond with the events in every detail. His vision would be partly symbolical, since he would have to describe the action of God whom he could not see; and partly realistic, since he would have to describe events just as they happened. It is now universally believed that the days were periods of time some of which may have consisted of millions of years. These periods would be presented before the mind of the sacred writer as separate scenes of the vision. Apart from little differences of this kind the order of creation, as revealed in the strata of the earth, agrees with the order revealed in the opening chapters of the book of Genesis.

The word "creation" has two meanings. In one sense it means the making of something out of nothing. In another sense it means the arrangement and development or evolution of that first something into the subsequent forms of nature. There are various opinions as to what extent this evolution took place.

A Catholic is allowed much freedom in this matter. One thing, however, he is bound to hold against all extreme evolutionists, namely, that the soul of man was specially created and infused into the body by God. There are other truths bearing on this subject which, though not of Catholic faith, should be insisted upon in the name of science. The two most important are, first, that no one has yet succeeded in producing life from non-life; and secondly, that no one has yet bridged the gulf between reason and sensation. These truths are the two great stumbling-blocks which lie in the way of those shallow scientists who would explain away the dogma of creation by an artificial and exaggerated system of evolution. It is well to insist upon the fact that the records of the rocks show practically the same order as the records of Scripture. First the common substance of the whole universe was produced from nothing. "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." From parallels throughout the whole Bible it is seen that "heaven and earth" is the usual expression for "all things." "I am the Lord that make *all things*, that alone stretch out the *heavens*, that establish the *earth*, and there is none with me." From the first common substance there is made the division of this planet from other planets, of the world from the sky. Then comes the separation of the land from the water, the two great divisions of lifeless nature. From the germs of life planted in each of these there springs successively the life of the green herb, and fruitful tree; of the fishes of the sea and the birds of the air; of the beasts and creeping creatures of the earth. Finally man is made by the special creation of his soul and the infusion of it into his already prepared body. The grace by which he is raised to a supernatural dignity is conferred at the first moment of his creation.

There are two classes of objections which are urged against the fact of creation. The first class is based on the absence of positive evidence for the fact. The answer to this difficulty has already been anticipated in the evidence of divine revelation. Were it not for revelation we should not be so sure of our answer, for, as we have seen, the idea of possible eternal creation is one that commended itself to the greatest of our theologians. We cannot wonder then if those who reject the express revela-

tion of God find themselves obliged to profess ignorance concerning the origin of the world.

The other class may be reduced to one difficulty, namely, the intrinsic impossibility of producing something out of nothing. It is expressed in the trite formula: *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* This axiom of the old philosophers was formulated out of their experience of particular causes and effects. Certainly there has never been known a particular agent who could produce something out of nothing. But the same cannot be said of the universal cause of all things. The fact that God is God and that He is omnipotent is sufficient to assure us that He can produce something from nothing, though how He does it must remain to us a lifelong mystery.

From experience and life we have reasoned to the fact of creation. From revelation we learnt many supplementary truths about creation. Now we may direct our fuller knowledge to a more fruitful life and experience. The first fruit is especially seasonable in these days — a knowledge of the supreme majesty of God. Among many classes, even where the existence of God is admitted, His rights are conceded sparingly, as if man were only a little smaller than God. In Germany there is one sect which has altered the form of the Lord's Prayer to express this feeling.[1] They do not say "Vater unser" as of old, but "Unser Vater," signifying that we come first and God second, that we must decide how far God shall exercise His dominion over us. Our appreciation of the dogma of creation, however, saves us from such unspeakable conceit. The new discoveries of astronomy, although they may spoil our childhood imagination of a heaven just on the other side of that blue sky which we see, unfold for us vaster conceptions of the immensity of God and of the magnitude of His creation. It has been computed that an express train, going fifty miles an hour, would take forty-five hundred million centuries to cross our universe. It can therefore only be the most blind infatuation that can seek to exalt small

[1] "Das 'Unser Vater' ein schön Gebet
Es dient und hilft, in allen Nöthen;
Wenn einer auch 'Vater Unser' fleht,
In Gottes Namen, lass ihn beten."
Goethe.

man to a level of divinity. On the other hand, the acknowledgment of our smallness in the midst of God's vast creation is the root and beginning of all our spirituality. It crushes our inborn pride. It make us realize at once that God is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

Next will come a sense of thankfulness to God. If it be so true that once we were nothing, that once the present vast universe was nothing, that every phase of life which we enjoy comes from the creative hand of God, then there can be no degree of gratitude too great to express our indebtedness to God. St. Paul may well ask of God's ministers: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" The same question may be asked of every man, and it is the duty, or rather the privilege, of every man to refer his gifts to their source: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all that He hath done for thee."

The same dogma shows us the appointed way to union with God. St. Ignatius explains it in his famous meditation on the right use of creatures. If God created all things, then God alone has supreme dominion over them. Man has only the temporary use of them. Man therefore must use them as God's property. It is expressly written: "The Lord hath made all things for himself." On the other hand, the enjoyment of these things is for man, but only so far as God sees fit: "Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat." Our duties in this respect therefore fall into two classes, the pleasant duties and the unpleasant ones. It is our duty, for instance, to love all our neighbors — they are all creatures of God. But then among neighbors there are the disagreeable as well as the agreeable. It would be impossible and contrary to human nature that our love should in all respects be the same towards each. We can, however, find different motives, all based on the dogma of creation, by which we can fulfil our duty of loving all men. In so far as our neighbor is agreeable, attractive, and winning, he manifests some reflection of divine goodness, and we are said to love him *in* God. In this case we draw near to God through our neighbor. In the other case, however, we must go to our neighbor through God. Know-

ing that God created him, we must believe that God had some beautiful design in doing so and love him accordingly. Here we are said to love our neighbor for *the sake* of God. Indeed the whole order of creatures, according as they are rightly used, is the ladder which leads from earth to heaven.

This middle place between the rest of creatures and God gives to man a great dignity. "Thou hast subjected all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen: moreover the beasts also of the fields." The subjection of the lower creation to man is symbolical of man's subjection to God. It is through the intelligent will of man that God receives the homage of irrational nature. If, therefore, man does not use his possessions intelligently for God's glory he fails in his high office to which he has been deputed.

Lastly, the dogma of creation reveals to us the fatherhood of God. The Creator of heaven and earth is God the Father Almighty. The notion of God the Creator implies that we are creatures and absolutely subject to God; but the notion of the Creator-Father implies that we are children and the objects of fatherly love and solicitude. And the fruit of this truth is patience in the misfortunes of life. At each stage of creation God looked upon His work and pronounced it to be good. At the end He took a view of the whole of what He had made and said it was very good. We therefore must believe that God could not create anything knowing it to be bad. This was the truth that inspired the mother of the Machabees to take her sons so heroically and with them to go to martyrdom. The story may well express what ought to be our attitude in the face of the comparatively small troubles which we have to meet. The sacred writer describes her as possessed of a man's heart and a woman's thought and as thus speaking to her sons: "I know not how you were formed in my womb: for I neither gave you breath, nor soul, nor life, neither did I frame the limbs of every one of you. But the Creator of the world, that formed the nativity of man, and that found out the origin of all, he will restore to you again in his mercy, both breath and life, as now you despise yourselves for the sake of his laws." And when she was asked by the cruel Antiochus to advise her youngest son to save his life, she only bent down to her child and whispered in her own language:

"I beseech thee, my son, look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them: and consider that God made them out of nothing, and mankind also; So thou shalt not fear this tormentor, but being made a worthy partner with thy brethren, receive death, that in that mercy I may receive thee again with thy brethren."

I believe in God the Father Almighty

BY THE REV. P. HEHEL, S.J.

Even the Pharisees, that hypocritical race, said to Jesus: "Master, we know that thou art truthful, and teachest the way of God according to the truth." He is the foundation of our faith. He alone it is through whom we believe in our hearts what we profess with our lips. In His most holy name, therefore, I begin to explain to you the twelve chief points of this faith, praying that I may be enlightened by Him who filled with His grace and inspired the Disciples to compose this creed.

According to the first article of this creed, therefore:

I. *What have we to believe?*

II. *What have we to do?*

I. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." As often as we repeat these words in prayer we utter an abundance of the greatest truths.

"I believe," we say; that means: I profess and affirm, that everything that is contained in these twelve articles is the eternal, infallible, and incontestable truth, for which I, as a Christian, am obliged to answer for with life and property. First, "I believe in God," we say. With these words we profess that we believe firmly that there is a God. "I believe in God," we say, not "I believe in the gods," so as to show that we confess and adore only one God, and to distinguish ourselves from the pagans and unbelievers who, having lost the knowledge of the one God, are sunk in idolatry and worship animals, plants, and stones, as gods.

Secondly, When we say "I believe in God the Father," we confess at the same time the distinction of Persons and the oneness of the Godhead. For the first Person of the Godhead is the

Father, who according to His Person is distinct from the Son and the Holy Ghost, but yet with them constitutes only one God, therefore is not earlier, not older, not greater, not more in the Godhead than the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Thirdly, we confess of this Divine Father that He is "almighty"; that means, so mighty that He can do all things, that He has all power, all strength and might to operate, to create, and to make what and how He will, without having need of any assistance.

And of this Almighty Father we confess that He is the "Creator of heaven and earth"; that is to say, of all visible and invisible creatures which are in heaven or out of heaven, upon earth or under the earth, which are of body or soul, which have been or will be. We confess that in the beginning He made the world and the heavens out of nothing, by His word alone, which no man, no angel, could do, which God alone can do.

We confess all this in the words of the first article: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." Still it is not enough for us to believe and confess that there is one God, who alone is God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. The spirits in hell believe this, and they tremble on that account. Nor is it enough that we believe His words and works, and hold this for an undoubted truth of faith; for this is known no less by the damned and is experienced by them as well as by the blessed. But for true faith it is expected that we also agree to all this with our hearts, that we embrace all this faithfully with our hearts, and consequently direct our heart and mind to God, place all our confidence, our love, and hope, in Him, adore Him as our Lord and God, fear and love Him as our Father, never despair of His goodness and mercy. For it is written, "Not every one who says, Lord, Lord," will be saved, but only those may hope to enter the kingdom of heaven who live according to the will of the Father, who by their works show forth and attest His faith.

Now, dear brethren, listen and learn how you should live according to the first article, so that your faith may not be fruitless and lifeless, but living, i.e., profitable and conducive to eternal life.

II. First, then, when we believe according to our confession that there is a God, we must not live like heathens, who either observe no law, because they do not know of the existence of a God, or live so godlessly, being blinded by the evil spirit whom they worship in their gods and who incites them to impurity, murder, and criminal actions, so that under the appearance of devotion they practise the most abominable vices.

What must we think of those Christians who live so godlessly that they neither keep the Divine law nor the commandments of the Church? You who lie, do you believe that there is a God who "will destroy all that speak a lie" (Ps. v. 7)? You who deceive, do you believe that there is a God who "curses him that acts deceitfully" (Matt. i. 14)? Do you believe, you who are addicted to impurity, that there is a God "who shall judge fornicators and adulterers" (Heb. xiii. 4)? Do you believe, you who sin by stealing, that there is a God who says that "confusion and repentance is upon a thief" (Ecclus. v. 17)? Behold, this means to act in one manner and believe in another: to say I believe in a God and to act as if there were no God.

Secondly, if you believe, as you profess, dear Christian, "that God is thy Father, that He hath possessed thee and made thee" of all mankind, you must be subject to Him like a devout child. You must obey Him from your heart, and endeavor to do His will in all things. You must undertake nothing that could offend Him, do nothing that might call forth His Holy anger. You must relinquish to His paternal dispensations, to His solicitude, your life and all that is yours; you must abandon yourself as completely as a blind man to his leader, as the child lets itself be led by the loving mother's hand. This is to show in reality that you believe in "God the Father." "Dost thou then not remember," says the Holy Ghost, "that God is thy Father, that He hath possessed thee and made thee and created thee? That He preserves thee, feeds, watches over and cares for thee?" Now, if you think and believe this, where then is the honor, the love, the obedience, the resignation, the childlike confidence towards your Father? Ah, your works are different from your words: they do not agree with your faith.

Thirdly, if you believe as you profess, that God is almighty,

you would always gladly submit your understanding and will to His words. You would leave no room for unbelief, allow no doubt to take root in your heart in regard to what He has said and promised. You would never ponder over His mysteries, never make over-curious inquiries as to how this or that could or could not happen, why and for what reason this so happened, will or might happen, how this is possible and can be true, and so forth. But it would be sufficient for you to know that He is truthful in His words, wonderful in His works, that He is almighty, and that for this reason nothing that He has ever said or promised can be impossible. And for this very reason you must know that everything comes from God, sin only excepted. You should thank Him for the good that He shows you, and praise Him also for that which appears to you to be a misfortune. For He can, as the Apostle says, "even out of temptation, i.e., out of evil, prepare an advantage for you." You must never doubt when want oppresses you, never despair when you no longer know how to help yourself. For the hand of the Lord is not shortened, His almighty arm has never been weakened. Abandon yourself therefore to the Lord, and you will experience that God can always help, when even man is of no further assistance. The reason that want always oppresses you is because your hope, your confidence, is far from being as strong as it ought to be, if your belief and profession really is, as you say: "I believe in God the Father Almighty."

In conclusion, if you believe, as you profess to do, that God is the Creator of all things in heaven and upon earth, you ought also to believe and know that from Him alone you have to beg and to expect all graces, everything necessary for your salvation in time and eternity. You should believe and know that He has created all creatures not without a purpose, but each one has a destined end and aim, namely, in the case of man, to serve God, his Creator, love and honor Him, and thus be blessed some day; in the case of other creatures, to serve man so that through them he may attain to the end and aim appointed for him. Hence you are not at liberty to use God's creatures according to your will and opinion, but according to the will of God for His honor and your salvation. If you do otherwise you violate God's property,

antagonize all creatures, because you deprive them of their end and aim and oppose yourself to the will of God. As heaven and earth and everything therein are the works of the omnipotent Creator, so must you know that He preserves and rules them as He does you, and that none of them would serve you if He had not decreed and permitted it.

This is all deduced from the first article. We declare all this when we say: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." We must observe all this that our works may agree with our faith. Then shall we one day enjoy the fruit of the true faith, namely, everlasting life in heaven.

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FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

SUBJECT

THE HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH

TEXT

Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, the bowels of mercy, etc. — COL. iii. 12.

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. — MATT. xiii. 24.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. Our Lord in the Gospel of to-day compares His Church to a field in which there is sowed good and bad seed.

By this parable, as He Himself later explained, He meant to show that there would be both good and bad members in the Church. But the presence of some evil members in His Kingdom does not destroy the holiness of the Church, and in the end He will gather up these evil-doers and cast them out into the furnace of fire.

I. **The Church is holy in her founder and in her doctrine.** 1. Unlike the originators of the various sects, who were merely human and oftentimes notorious sinners, the founder of the Catholic Church was Christ, the fountain of all holiness. 2. The teaching of the Church is holy because she has never departed from the commandments of God, nor ceased to urge upon men the necessity of good works, and to counsel the highest perfection. Rather than sacrifice any portion of divine law she has endured persecution and suffered the loss of entire nations. We must obey God rather than men, has been her motto. Compare the conduct of Luther, who permitted Philip of Hesse to have two wives, with that of Pope Clement VII, who excommunicated Henry VIII rather than annul the latter's marriage.

II. **The Church possesses the means of holiness.** 1. The Catholic Church alone has all the Sacraments and the true sacrifice of the New Law, which are the main channels of grace and sanctification. 2. Only in the Catholic Church do we find a complete and proper use of sacramentals, feasts, observances, and devotions, by which the mind is elevated to heavenly things and holiness made more easily attainable.

III. **The Church is holy in her members.** 1. Only in the Catholic Church are there to be found, in every age, in every country, and from every condition of life, persons whose extraordinary sanctity has been attested to by God Himself through the gift of miracles, and who, in consequence, have been raised to the altars by canonization and beatification. The number of holy confessors, martyrs, virgins, and widows thus officially inscribed in the catalogue of the saints is well nigh innumerable. 2. Besides this great number of saints officially recognized in

the Church there are at all times and in all countries vast multitudes of holy souls who, though not possessing the gift of miracles like the canonized saints, have nevertheless a sanctity far exceeding anything outside the Church, e.g., devout priests, the members of religious orders of men and women, self-sacrificing missionaries to foreign lands, daily and weekly communicants, etc. 3. If all the members of the Church are not holy, it is only because the cockle grows along with the wheat, as our Lord foretold in to-day's Gospel. Human nature always retains its propensities to evil, and men are at all times free to use or abuse the gifts of grace. That there should be some wicked members in the true Church ought not to cause any surprise when we remember that even among the twelve Apostles whom Christ Himself chose one was a traitor.

Conclusion. All the members of the Church are called to be saints. We should strive faithfully to live according to this high vocation by putting into practice the holy teachings of the Church (see to-day's Epistle), by making use of the sacraments and the other means of sanctification which the Church affords, by studying the lives of the saints and trying to imitate the good example of the Church's holy members.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article IX of the Creed

holiness of the church

Another distinctive mark of the Church is holiness, as we learn from these words of the prince of the apostles: "You are a chosen generation, a holy nation." [1] The Church is called holy because she is consecrated and dedicated to God,[2] as other things, such as vessels, vestments, altars, when appropriated and dedicated to the worship of God, although material, are called holy. In the same sense the first-born, who were dedicated to the Most High God, were also called holy.[3]

It should not be deemed matter of surprise that the Church,

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 9. [2] Levit. xxvii. 28, [3] Exod. xiii. 12.

although numbering among her children many sinners, is called holy; for as those who profess any art, although they should depart from its rules, are called artists, so the faithful, although offending in many things, and violating the engagements to the observance of which they had solemnly pledged themselves, are called holy, because they are made the people of God, and are consecrated to Christ, by Baptism and faith. Hence, St. Paul calls the Corinthians sanctified and holy, although it is certain that among them there were some whom he severely rebuked as carnal, and also charged with grosser crimes.[1]

The Church is also to be called holy because, as the body, she is united to her head, Christ Jesus,[2] the fountain of all holiness, from whom flow the graces of the Holy Spirit and the riches of the divine bounty. St. Augustine, interpreting these words of the prophet, "Preserve my soul, for I am holy,"[3] thus admirably expresses himself: "Let the body of Christ boldly say, let also that one man, exclaiming from the ends of the earth, boldly say, with Christ his head, and under Christ his head, 'I am holy': for he received the grace of holiness, the grace of baptism and of remission of sins." And a little further on: "If all Christians and all the faithful, having been baptized in Christ, have put him on, according to these words of the Apostle: 'as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ';[4] if they are made members of his body, and yet say they are not holy, they do an injury to their head, whose members are holy."[5] [6]

Moreover, the Church alone has the legitimate worship of sacrifice, and the salutary use of the sacraments, by which, as the efficacious instruments of divine grace, God establishes us in true holiness; so that to possess true holiness we must belong to this Church. The Church, therefore, it is clear, is holy,[7] and holy because she is the body of Christ, by whom she is sanctified, and in whose blood she is washed.[8] [9]

[1] 1 Cor. i. 2; iii. 3. [2] Eph. iv. 15, 16. [3] Ps. lxxxv. 2.
[4] Gal. iii. 27. [5] Eph. v. 26, 27, 30. [6] St. Aug. in Psalm lxxxv. 2.
[7] Eph. i. 1–4. [8] Eph. i. 7, 13; v. 26.
[9] On the holiness of the Church, see Justin Martyr, in Apologies; Tertullian, in Apology; Aug. contra Fulg. c. 17; Gregory, Moral. L. 3, 7, c. 7.

Sermon

The Church is Holy

BY THE RT. REV. WM. T. RUSSELL, D.D., LL.D.

Theological terms for the most part convey a rather misty and confused conception to the average mind. The words "holy," "sanctified," "religious," "righteous," and "justified" mean the same thing to most people, and to many they are mere cant expressions, so vague as to mean almost nothing. When we claim for any religious organization that it is the *holy* Church of Christ, we must first clearly define the meaning of the word *holy* according to Scriptural usage, and secondly we must show that the religious organization in question has a right to claim the title *holy* as its *special* attribute.

In Scripture, the two words "holy" and "sanctified" mean the same. They are used in regard to places, things, and persons. For example, certain lands among the Israelites were to be holy to the Lord, that is, separated, set apart from other lands, for religious purposes. Again, the Israelites are commanded to sanctify the first fruits and the first-born of all animals, that is, set them apart unto the Lord for sacrifice. Likewise Aaron and his sons were to be holy to the Lord, that is, separated from the rest of the Israelites and devoted to the special work of the altar. Finally, God is called holy, holy, holy, that is, the One who is separated from and transcends all else. The basic idea underlying all usage of the word "holy" is, therefore, found in such words as "separated," "set apart," "isolated," "distinct," "different from others," "exclusive," and "select."

The Church of Christ we should expect to find holy, that is, unlike other organizations, (1) in its life and character, (2) in its purpose and the means to attain that purpose, (3) in its fruits.

I. *Holy in its Life and Character.* In its life the true Church of Jesus Christ must resemble its Master in being separated from the world. "If you had been of the world," said our Lord, "the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John xv. 19). "The disciple is not above the

master, nor the servant above his lord. . . . If they have called the good man of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household. . . . Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace, but the sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against the mother in law. And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me." "Every one therefore that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. x. 24, 25, 33–38, 32, 33).

Our Lord warned His Church beforehand of its future trials, lest it be scandalized at the things which were to come upon it. "They will put you out of the synagogues," He said, "yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God" (John xvi. 2).

Now, I ask, which of all the denominations calling themselves Christian does this description fit? Of all the Christian churches, which is the one that is looked upon as a separate organization? which stands apart from all the others? Against which one are all the others united in opposition? Is it not true that all the numerous Protestant denominations are at variance on every point except one — hostility to the Catholic Church? Is it not true that while Protestants profess to leave every one to his own interpretation of the Scriptures, and find no fault with a friend who becomes an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, a Methodist, or a Baptist, they will condemn and often ostracize one who becomes a Catholic? Is it not true that there is only one church which demands for Christ's sake a separation even from father, mother, and all that is dear?

Which church to-day is in every land under the sun, and by every nation is persecuted? A few years ago there were Catholics among us so weak as to be ready to admit that all Christian denominations were more or less alike; but during the last five

years, in which the Catholic Church has been singled out for misrepresentation, calumny, and vile persecution in this country, these weak-spined Catholics must be convinced that they are not regarded as other people. They may be surprised at the position in which they find themselves. It is unjust, — yes, often cruel; but let them not be shocked. They knew not formerly of what spirit they were. Through this persecution our Lord has taught them that His Church is not like other churches. If it were of the world, the world would love its own.

It was said of our Lord that He was *holy;* in this, that He was not like other teachers of religion. "Behold," they said, "he teaches as one having authority, and not as the scribes and Pharisees" (Matt. vii. 29; Mark i. 22). Of all the Christian denominations to-day, which church stands apart, is holy, like Christ, in this respect? There can be only one which speaks with authority — the Catholic Church. For all the others — the Protestant churches — have abandoned *authority* and rest merely on *private judgment.* There is not a single Protestant teacher, minister, or bishop, however learned or eminent, who can say with authority to the most ignorant of his congregation: "My friend, the law of God commands thus and so." The other, according to Protestant principles, will have an unquestionable right to reply: "I am sorry we can't agree. My interpretation of the law is different."

II. *Holy in its Purpose and Means.* The Church of Christ must be holy, that is, distinct and separated from all other organizations, in the purpose of its existence, and the means it uses to attain that purpose.

"I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. . . . And this is the will of my Father that sent me: that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have life everlasting" (John vi. 38, 40). "As the Father hath sent me, so also I send you" (John xx. 21).

It is plain from this that the special purpose of the Church of Christ is to save men by teaching them to do God's will. The idea of doing God's will whether one likes it or not, whether one derives comfort from it or not, is foreign to the Protestant conception of religion. The Protestant regards religion from the

viewpoint of man. The Catholic considers religion from the viewpoint of God. The Protestant asks: How shall I attain comfort? The Catholic asks, What is my duty? The former aims at a self-conscious righteousness; the latter aims to please God. Protestants generally regard religion as a convenient means to make children docile, husbands and wives faithful, and to produce good, patriotic citizens; the duty to God is secondary. The Catholic looks upon religion primarily as his reasonable service to God, his Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer; all other considerations are secondary. Civilization and humanitarianism are the results of the Church's influence, but from the words of our Lord it is evident that they cannot constitute the primary purpose of the Church's activity. Many of the non Catholic churches to-day are devoting themselves almost exclusively to the relief of humanity, while neglecting the worship of the Deity.

Furthermore, the Church of Christ must be holy, that is different from all other organizations, in the kind of means it employs to attain its end. For the doing of His Father's will our Lord employed not riches, nor social influence, nor political power. On the contrary, He was so poor that He had not whereon to lay His head. Socially it was said of Him that he was a wine-bibber and "a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt. xi. 19; Luke vii. 34). While He taught obedience and respect for all authority, He allied Himself with no political party. When approached on the subject He said: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Referring to His Church, He said: "I am come to call not saints but sinners" (Mark ii. 17). The Kingdom of Heaven (His Church) is like a net, gathering good and bad fish (Matt. xiii. 47–49). It is a field sown with both wheat and cockle (Matt. xiii. 24–30).

Now, when I speak of a church that is the wealthiest and most fashionable, you know what church I mean, and that it is not the Catholic Church. When I speak of churches that preach politics instead of religion from their pulpits and use political power to advance their spiritual hobbies, you know I do not refer to the Catholic Church. When I speak of churches that use, as their special means of proselytism, concerts, gymnastic associations, and swimming pools, you know that I do not refer to the Catho-

lic Church. Neither can it be said that the characteristics I have just mentioned are the marks of the Church of Christ. When, however, I speak of a church that is called a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and harlots; a church which has little wealth, and whose members suffer from unjust discrimination; a church that is the refuge of the sinner and the outcast; a church which relies upon spiritual means primarily for the conversion of sinners and the spread of the faith, you know that I cannot refer to any Protestant denomination. These things can be said of only one church, which stands apart from all others. As these things were said of Christ, they are said of the Catholic Church to-day.

III. *Holy in its Effects.* The Church of Christ should always be distinguishable from all other organizations by its spiritual effects; for Christ promised that His Church would endure to the end of the world. The average Protestant has a very hazy notion about the purpose of Christ's mission on earth. Vaguely, and in a large, confused sort of way, he will say that Christ came to do good, and that He established His Church to do good. True, but all men are engaged in doing good; and, generally speaking, all organizations are for some good purpose. Every beneficial society, life-insurance company, every city and state, is an organization for doing good. What is it, then, that makes Christ and His Church *holy*, that is, apart from all others in the kind of good they are doing?

The holiness or distinctness of the Church of Christ should consist in this, that, resembling its Divine Master, the good it accomplishes must be, first, of a superior order, and secondly, the outcome of the most exalted motives. The goodness of Christ was unselfish and heroic. "Greater love than this," He said, "no man hath — that he lay down his life for his friend." Can we find such transcendent goodness in the world to-day? This heroic, unselfish goodness, I assert without fear of contradiction, you will find in the Catholic Church as you will find it nowhere else. It is part of her ordinary life — it is continuous throughout the ages. Come with me to the leper settlements, where priests and nuns are giving their lives for the afflicted, after sacrificing home, relatives, friends, comforts, riches, and all else that is dearest to the human heart. Call to mind the

devoted missionaries who go out from home to foreign lands — not, like Protestant missionaries, with their wives and children and servants and plenty of money, — but to suffer and to die. But you need not go so far afield. The great sacrifice that the Catholic priesthood represents is so general as to attract little or no attention. With all our faults, it is a noticeable fact that Protestant ministers endeavor to imitate us by wearing the Roman collar, and nothing pleases a preacher more than to be mistaken for a Catholic priest, and called "Father." Imitation is born of admiration. Seldom do we realize the enormous sacrifice exemplified in this city by the Little Sisters of the Poor, the sisters in our hospitals and schools, and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. Protestantism unfurls its flags and beats its drums and grows eloquent over the achievements of a Florence Nightingale or a Clara Barton. It is right that it should. They deserve all honor. They were noble women. But let us remember that the Catholic Church numbers such heroines, not by ones and twos, but by the thousand, in every land and in every age.

Not only is superior virtue so general in the Catholic Church as to be almost common, but it is prompted by the most exalted motives. There are some, indeed, outside the Church who give themselves without money consideration for the service of others, in helping the poor, in teaching the ignorant, and in alleviating the sorrows of the afflicted, but they do so almost invariably from a feeling of mere human sympathy or pity. The instances, moreover, of such generosity are exceedingly rare. The Catholic Church, however, proposes to her children all that is noble and generous in the motives and activities of the uplifter, but over and above the mere human sympathy that actuates the uplifter, she inspires her priests, nuns, and laity to labor for the highest conceivable motive — the love of God. Animated by such sublime motives, Catholic charity is as much exalted above ordinary, non-Catholic humanitarianism as Heaven is above earth.

This explains why heroic virtue can be a part of the ordinary life of the Catholic Church. This is the keynote of the life of a Father Damien, a Francis of Assisi, and a Vincent de Paul, all of whom have many followers to-day. Inspired by this high motive in the Middle Ages, a St. Raymond could gather round him a

multitude of men in the association for the redemption of captives, who bound themselves by vow to take the places of the Christian captives, and to live in slavery among the Turks, in order that prisoners with wives and children might return to their homes. Has the world ever witnessed the equal of such goodness? It is fruit like this which proclaims the Catholic Church divine, and makes her holy — infinitely apart from and superior to all other religious bodies.

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, and be not conformed to this world." Thus did St. Paul exhort the Christians of his day. It is to be regretted that while the Church aims to make her children holy — unlike and apart from the children of the world — not all her children appreciate their superior vocation. From even its imperfect knowledge of Catholic teaching, the world expects the Catholic to be a leader in good example. The Catholic too often, instead of asking himself, What are the ideals of my glorious Church? asks himself, What is the rest of the world doing? Instead of courageously upholding the sublime principles of the Catholic Faith, there are some who are nervously anxious lest they be judged different from the worldlings around them. "My brethren," as the Apostle says, "we are a holy people," that is, "a people apart." We are in the world religiously what the Jews are racially. Whether we will it or not, as long as we are of the Catholic Church, God has provided that the world will not regard us as other men.

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SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

SUBJECT

THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH

TEXT

From you was spread abroad the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia, and Achaia, but also in every place, your faith which is towards God, is gone forth. — 1 THESS. i. 8.

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a grain of mustard seed, . . . which is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof. — MATT. xiii. 31, 32.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. The parable of the mustard seed is intended to illustrate the external growth of the Church which, despite its humble beginning, is now spread over the entire world.

I. The Church of Christ must be Catholic. 1. Catholicity is a distinguishing mark or sign of the true Church, by which, while remaining one, she is at the same time universal, that is, her members are sufficiently numerous to render her easily conspicuous, and are found in all parts of the world. 2. It was foretold in the Old Testament that the Church of Christ would be universal, — "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxii. 18); Daniel saw in vision the Church as a stone, which grew into a great mountain and filled the whole earth (Dan. ii. 35, 44); Malachy predicted that from the rising to the setting of the sun God's name would be great among the Gentiles (Malachy i. 11); Our Lord commanded His disciples to teach all nations (Matt. xxviii. 19). 3. This universality of the Church was not to be instantaneous, but was to be the result of a gradual growth, like the mustard seed of to-day's Gospel. Even in the time of the Apostles the Church had begun to spread

over the then known world, as St. Paul asserts in to-day's Epistle. See also Rom. xii. 18. After the Council of Jerusalem in A.D. 51 the Apostles divided the world among them, and separated for their work of preaching the Gospel.

II. The Church of Rome alone is Catholic. 1. Only the Church of Rome is everywhere one in her teaching, her worship, and her government. While Rome is her centre, her circumference is the extremity of the earth. 2. The great majority of all Christians are Catholics; the Roman Church has far more in her fold than all the sects combined. 3. The name **Catholic** has been attributed to the Church of Rome from the very beginning down to the present time, and to her alone.

CONCLUSION. As the Church is Catholic so should be its members; that is, all should strive by good example, by prayer, by assisting domestic and foreign missions, to spread abroad the word of the Lord and bring others to the one true fold of Christ.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

ARTICLE IX OF THE CREED

CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH

The third mark of the Church is, that she is Catholic, that is, universal. And justly is she called Catholic, because, as St. Augustine says, "she is diffused by the splendor of one faith from the rising to the setting sun."[1] Unlike republics of human institution, or the conventicles of heretics, she is not circumscribed within the limits of any one kingdom, nor confined to the members of any one society of men, but embraces within the amplitude of her love all mankind, whether barbarians or Scythians, slaves or freemen, male or female. Therefore it is written, "Thou . . . hast redeemed us to God, in thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us to our God a kingdom."[2] Speaking of the Church, David says: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance,

[1] S. Aug. serm. 131 and 181, de temp. [2] Apoc. v. 9, 10.

and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession";[1] and also, "I will be mindful of Rahab and of Babylon knowing me";[2] and "*This* man and *that* man is born in her."[3] To this Church, moreover, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,"[4] belong all the faithful who have existed from Adam to the present day, or who shall exist, in the profession of the true faith, to the end of time; all of whom are founded and raised upon the one corner-stone, Christ, who made both one, and announced peace to them that are near and to them that are afar. She is also called universal, because all who desire eternal salvation must cling to and embrace her, like those who entered the ark to escape perishing in the flood.[5] This, therefore, is to be taught as a most just criterion, to distinguish the true from a false church.

Sermons

The Races within the Fold

BY THE REV. JOHN H. STAPLETON

I. The religious world offers the spectacle of folds and shepherds, of which there is number and variety infinite. And when men have wearied of contradictory messages, opposing standards, hostile attitudes and warring sects, they settle down to the comfortable conviction that one religion is as good as another. There is, however, another ideal in the world, whose aim is one fold and one shepherd for all the sheep for whom Christ gave His life, one Church for all men. The Catholic Church stands alone in this respect, for she claims to have been sent to realize this ideal; and what is more, claims to have realized it in very fact. She is the only religious body that has ever come forward and, with credentials from God, laid claim to the extraordinary title of Unity and Catholicity. To teach all truth, to all men, in all times and in all places — no other religion ever advanced such a claim, ever attempted such a mission or ever succeeded in such an attempt. And what is still more singular, on whatever topic of Christian faith she speaks, whatever manner of men she ad-

[1] Ps. ii. 8. [2] Ps. lxxxvi. 4. [3] Ps. lxxxvi. 5.
[4] Eph. ii. 20. [5] Gen. vii. 7.

dresses, in whatever age or clime she exercises her mission, her teaching, like the God she believes has sent her, like the truth she believes she utters, is one, unchanged and unchangeable, amid the universal flood of unstable, shifting, conflicting doctrines and opinions that storm and roar about her. One therefore she is, not only in the possession of all Divine truth, as the refuge of all men called to the knowledge of the truth of God, but one also in teaching, explaining, defending, and defining the revealed word. Men may or may not honor with their approval and acceptance these unique claims; they may or may not prefer for themselves principles less rigid and exacting, less uncompromising with the pride of life so strong within us all. But they rarely refuse just credit and a generous meed of admiration for an institution that has taught mankind and the centuries, and then, on the oneness and harmony of every official statement she has made, of every definition she has uttered with the whole body of her teaching, stakes her honor and her life.

II. And why should this attitude appeal to the fair-minded? It is considered the plain duty of every man who would be honest with himself to stick to the truth. And if he does, he will never change in mind, heart, or outward expression towards it. For truth does not and cannot change; it is ever the same. If it did change, it could change only to error and falsehood, and then would of course cease to exist. Thus does truth perish. It is therefore required of every man — and of a church or creed or religion as well — not to depart one jot or tittle from those truths which God has revealed, and to remain in possessing and propounding them as firm, as unyielding, as immutable as the everlasting hills. Now, to the Church of Christ, the one true Fold, such Divine revelation has been made, and to her these truths have been confided. But if there be many folds and one as good as another, what becomes of truth and loyalty to truth, since truths received in one place are rejected in another, beliefs honored today are cast off to-morrow, creeds, the expression of those truths and beliefs, are tinkered to suit passing fancy or popular passion! What is all this maze of contradiction but the destruction of truth! And when each is taught to believe what he likes, what is this huge compromise with error but the denial of truth!

Common sense makes it clear to us that contradiction is the destruction of truth, that compromise with error is its denial. To allow a thing to be at one and the same time true and false, is to stultify oneself mentally and morally. To let go the truth once consciously possessed, is the lowest form of moral cowardice; to receive as truth that which is not known to be the truth, is a crime against the human mind. And no official expounder of Divine teachings can allow them to be altered under penalty of making God a liar, God Who is Truth Itself. It is in obedience to this fundamental principle that the Catholic Church as the One true Fold puts forth Unity as one of her marks of Divine origin and remains faithful to it even when men would prefer otherwise. God is not where disorder is; His truth is not where contradiction is. If His revealed Word is still on earth, having been delivered into the keeping of man, it is to be found where the teaching is one, as truth is one and as God is one.

And this teaching that is one, uniform, logical, and uncompromising, is really the soul food intended by the Almighty for every creature come from His hand. It is evident that He created the human mind normally receptive of truth alone, without admixture of error or contradiction. The normal man has therefore a natural right to hear from the lips of the authorized custodian of the Divine word nothing but the truth, and that perpetually. Men are all destined for one goal; the path of salvation is the same for all. All men are created equal — and in this sense alone is the famous saying perfectly true; human nature is substantially the same always and everywhere. Men have to-day, as they have always had, the same needs; they have the same struggles for good, the same difficulties against evil, the same moral miseries. Hence they require the same guiding knowledge, the same spiritual sustenance, the same helps and remedies. They can no more thrive on truth and error than they can thrive on meat and poison. And therefore, being all called to a knowledge of the same Divine truths, they are all called to the one fold, and to them all the one shepherd is sent.

Whether or not the words "there shall be one fold," fallen from the lips of Christ, contain a prediction or a command, matters little. For we know that a prophecy from God, in so far as

it concerns something to be done by His creatures, amounts to a command. What God says will be done, must and shall be done; His words foretelling an effect to be produced by human agency, resolve themselves into a law whereby men are bound to make His words come true and to see to it that His will is done on earth as it is in heaven. Thus when Mary spoke by the Spirit of God and announced that all nations should arise and called her blessed, men were thereby commanded to fulfil the prediction in the designs of God. In like manner, when Christ said "there shall be one fold and one shepherd," He spoke of a reality to be accomplished, even though many might perversely oppose it, remain outside the fold, refuse to listen to His voice. One kingdom without rival or division, to which should be called and into which should gather the multitudes of the nations — this is what Christ foretold. A church which should be One and Catholic — this is what had to come to pass, or Christ must be counted with the prophets of falsehood.

He would also be reckoned with those unworthy suppliants whose prayer has no power with the heavenly Father, He who as God is equal to the Father, and as man, St. Paul tells us, was "heard for his reverence." How blasphemous to assert that Jesus' petition before the throne of heaven was spurned! Yet this is the prayer the Divine Saviour uttered to His "Holy Father" in favor of those whom He was sent to save — "whom thou hast given me" — that is, all men: "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

Finally, this scheme of one religion for all men did not originate in the fertile mind of some idle dreamer. Its source is emphatically in the Law: "go, teach all nations." Here is a commission, a Divine commission. It was given to a church which Christ had founded; which, according to the Apostle, was built precisely and equipped exactly for such a task, framed together, compacted, and fitly joined together by joints and bands, "one body and one spirit; as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one Baptism"; which was therefore endowed with the energy and faculty to preserve its unity in the

bonds of faith, to spread out to all men and gather them into the fold; to which if men hearken not, they are to be regarded as heathens and publicans. The commission reads: "teach . . ." not what she felt like teaching, what might suit her, what might suit the men to whom she spoke; but "all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Here is a commission. A church was sent by Christ, who is God, on such a mission; this much is clear. Where is that church? Or rather, where is the adverse claimant of such a tremendous mandate? Who else but the Church known as the One and Catholic has ever dared to assume such a colossal responsibility?

III. We need not look farther than our own land to discover the reality of the Church's claim to be one and Catholic, that is, as a Church with one object before her vision — men, namely all men, human beings with souls purchased by Christ; with one message for them all — the truths of God deposited in her bosom; and with a voice of authority and the knowledge of all men and all tongues to deliver that message. Here are all the nations of earth gathered together. Here swarm representatives of every race under the sun. In this modern Babel of mankind we behold men from the remote corners of the habitable globe standing shoulder to shoulder, kneeling side by side, in one faith and religious obedience. They differ seemingly in all things save humanity and religion. And while they await the process of amalgamation at work about them, they stand forth in their various nationalities and tongues as members of the Fold that is One and Catholic. What was the pentecostal gathering — Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, etc., — compared with the myriad-tongued immigrants landing on our shores? Truly the world is hers.

Here she meets her children and gathers them into her ample fold, into her motherly and all-embracing arms. The worldling has seen her at work in our midst and has noted how she knows no difference of race, color, or language, of time, place, or social condition; how she ignores all distinctions and how to all these children of men she speaks alike with the voice of God's representative of the things that pertain to God. They all have a calling to and a place at her table where she breaks bread to the soul

hungry for God; and every one is sure to receive from her hands the same spiritual food and to hear from her lips the same spiritual truths, whether his abode had been among the snows and ice of the north or he dwelt on the luxuriant plains of the tropics or amid the gaiety of the capitals of the world. He is the same to her, no more, no less, whether he be prince or pauper, black, white, or yellow, refined or uncouth in the degree of his civilization, whatever the mellifluous sweetness or the broken jargon of his native speech. Language may divide nation, but it makes no difference to her. Diversity of tongue is an accident. It bars none, estranges none; it is no title to preferment, no badge of dishonor or disgrace. Neither is it an obstacle to her activity and success. When she speaks, it is Peter's voice that is heard from Maine to Texas, as it was heard when it rang out so fearlessly in Jerusalem on the memorable Pentecost morning when, in company with the other disciples, with one accord, delivering the same message but with divers tongues according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak, he astonished the various tribes that heard him, every man in his own tongue wherein he was born, announcing the wonderful works of God.

And so here, as everywhere in the world, the familiar sounds of many tongues are music to her well-trained ear. Strangers though we may be in a strange land, we are no strangers to her. For to whatever corner of the earth we trace our origin, to whatever race we belong, she begat us in the Christian faith and stood sponsor at the baptism of our people. She knows us and we know her, like the Good Shepherd and His flock. The problem of races is no problem to her, for she was formed from the beginning to the task of catechising the universal race of men. In an atmosphere like ours politically, with our habits and institutions, this heterogeneous mass will one day be welded together and moulded into a type of mankind unknown before in the world, which we fondly believe will exhibit itself as the best product of the human race. It will take years, it may take centuries, to effect the transformation. But even if it should never come to pass, the spiritual and religious homogeneity of the bulk of our foreign population is an accomplished fact. The Church would not be One, if her many-tongued children proved here

capable, as they have never elsewhere been capable, of disintegrating the inviolable body of her doctrines. She would not be Catholic if she could not assimilate them all.

IV. When the mission of the Church to teach all truth to all men, in all times and in all climes, shall have been fulfilled, she will pass away. When will that be? Twenty centuries that have leveled every human institution to the dust and buried the very ruins from the sight of men, have left her younger and more vigorous than ever. Will twenty centuries more succeed better in the work of destruction? Let prophets forecast as they must. This much is true: the mission of the Church will certainly one day be accomplished and she will pass away. But when she does, it will be in the fulness of time proposed to her work. It will be when men, for whose needs she was established, shall themselves have passed away and have no further need of her. She will cease to exist, but that will be when the great heart of nature ceases to throb in the heaving bosom of the ocean, for Christ's word is truth: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

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SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

SUBJECT

BAPTISM, ITS NATURE AND INSTITUTION

TEXT

And all in Moses were baptized, in the cloud, and in the sea. — 1 Cor. x. 2.
Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. — Matt. xx. 4.

Analysis

Introduction. The passing of the Jews through the Red Sea was a type of Christian Baptism, as St. Paul tells us in to-day's Epistle. As the Israelites by the waters of the sea escaped from the tyranny of Pharaoh, so the Christian by the waters of Baptism is freed from the bondage of Satan. But the reception of this Sacrament is not only a liberation from sin, it is also an admission into the vineyard of the Lord, and imposes upon us the obligation of faithfully serving the Master and of living our lives for God.

I. **The meaning of Baptism.** 1. Names of this Sacrament: (a) Baptism signifies **washing**; (b) it is called the **Sacrament of faith,** because by it we profess our faith in the doctrines of Christianity; (c) it is called **Christening,** because it makes one a Christian; (d) it is called **purgation, burial,** etc., by St. Paul, because by it we die and are buried to sin; (e) finally, it is called the **beginning of the most holy commandments,** because it is the beginning of the Christian life. 2. Baptism is defined: the Sacrament of regeneration by water in the words of Christ.

II. **The constituent elements of Baptism.** 1. The matter of Baptism is natural water of any kind, as is evident from Scripture (John iii. 5; Eph. v. 26; 1 John v. 8, etc.). That water should be the matter of this Sacrament was previously signified: (a) by many figures, such as the Deluge (1 Peter iii. 20, 21), the

cleansing of Naaman the Syrian (4 Kings v. 14), the virtue of the Pool of Bethsaida (John v. 2), the passage of the Red Sea (to-day's Epistle); (b) by prophecies, such as the invitation of Isaias to all that thirst (Isa. lv. 1), the waters issuing from the Temple seen by Ezechiel (Ezech. xlvii. 1); etc. Water is an appropriate element of this Sacrament; it is easy to find, and its properties of washing and cooling signify the effects of the Sacrament. According to the law of the Church, chrism is mingled with the baptismal water. 2. Baptism may be administered by immersion, sprinkling, or pouring, since in any one of these ways the effect of the Sacrament is signified. That the last two ways are valid methods of administering the Sacrament is proved by Scripture (Acts ii. 41; xvi. 33) and ecclesiastical tradition. Not infrequently in the early Church, Baptism was administered to prisoners, the sick, and those on shipboard, who could not have been baptized by immersion. The baptismal water should be poured on the head when possible. 3. The form of Baptism uses the words appointed by Christ: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," which must be pronounced simultaneously with the pouring of the water.

III. The institution of Baptism. 1. Baptism was foretold by our Lord to Nicodemus (John iii). 2. It was instituted most probably when our Lord Himself was baptized in the Jordan. 3. Its use began when Christ and His disciples were baptizing (John iii. iv). 4. The Sacrament became of precept when our Lord expired on the cross. 5. The necessity of Baptism was proclaimed by the Saviour after the Resurrection (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15), and its solemn promulgation took place on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 38, 39).

Conclusion. 1. Gratitude to God for the inestimable blessings of Baptism. 2. The faithful should realize the obligation of the vows made in Baptism to renounce Satan and all his works and pomps, and to be ever devoted laborers in the vineyard of Christ.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part II

The Sacrament of Baptism

IMPORTANCE OF A KNOWLEDGE OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

From what has been hitherto said on the Sacraments in general, we may judge how necessary it is, to a proper understanding of the doctrines of the Christian faith, and to the practice of Christian piety, to know what the Catholic Church proposes for our belief on the Sacraments in particular. That a perfect knowledge of baptism is particularly necessary to the faithful, an attentive perusal of the epistles of St. Paul will force upon the mind. The Apostle, not only frequently, but also in language the most energetic, in language full of the Spirit of God, renews the recollection of this mystery, exalts its transcendent dignity, and in it places before us the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord as objects of our contemplation and imitation.[1] The pastor, therefore, can never think that he has bestowed sufficient labor and attention on the exposition of this Sacrament.

WHEN MOST CONVENIENTLY EXPLAINED

Besides the Vigils of Easter and Pentecost, days on which the Church used to celebrate this Sacrament with the greatest solemnity and devotion, and on which particularly, according to ancient practice, its divine mysteries are to be explained, the pastor should also take occasion at other times to make it the subject of his instructions.[2] For this purpose a most convenient opportunity would seem to present itself whenever the pastor, being about to administer this Sacrament, finds himself surrounded by a considerable number of the faithful. On such occasions, it is true, his exposition cannot embrace everything that regards baptism; but he can develop one or two points with greater facility, while the faithful see them expressed and contemplate them with devout attention, in the sacred ceremonies which he is performing. Thus each person, reading a lesson of admonition in the person of him who is receiving baptism, calls to mind the prom-

[1] Rom. vi. 3; Col. ii. 12, 13.

[2] On this ancient practice see Tertul. lib. de Baptis. c. 19; Basil. in exhort. ad bapt.; Amb. lib. de myst. Paschae.

ises by which he has bound himself to the service of God when initiated by baptism, and reflects whether his life and morals show that fidelity to which every one pledges himself by professing the name of Christian.

MEANING OF THE WORD "BAPTISM"

To render what we have to say on this subject perspicuous, we shall explain the nature and substance of the Sacrament, premising, however, an explanation of the word "baptism." The word "baptism," as is well known, is of Greek derivation. Although used in Scripture to express not only that ablution which forms part of the Sacrament, but also every species of ablution,[1] and sometimes, figuratively, to express sufferings, yet it is employed by ecclesiastical writers to designate not every sort of ablution, but that which forms part of the Sacrament and is administered with the prescribed sacramental form. In this sense the Apostles very frequently make use of the word in accordance with the institution of Christ.[2]

OTHER NAMES

This Sacrament the Holy Fathers designate also by other names. St. Augustine informs us that it was sometimes called the Sacrament of Faith, because by receiving it we profess our faith in all the doctrines of Christianity;[3] by others it was denominated "Illumination," because by the faith which we profess in baptism the heart is illumined: "Call to mind," says the Apostle, alluding to the time of baptism, "the former days, wherein, being illumined, you endured a great fight of afflictions."[4] St. Chrysostom, in his sermon to the baptized, calls it a purgation, through which "we purge away the old leaven, that we may become a new paste";[5] he also calls it a burial, a planting, and the cross of Jesus Christ.[6] The reasons for all these appellations may be gathered from the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans.[7] St. Denis calls it the beginning of the most holy commandments, for this obvious reason, that baptism is, as it were,

[1] Mark vii. 4.
[2] Rom. vi. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 21; on the eight kinds of baptism, see Damasc. lib. 4, de fide orthod. 10.
[3] Aug. epist. 25, in fin.
[4] Heb. x. 32.
[5] 1 Cor. v. 7.
[6] S. Chrysost. x. 5.
[7] Rom. vi. 3.

the gate through which we enter into the fellowship of the Christian life, and begin thenceforward to obey the commandments.[1] This exposition of the different names of the Sacrament of baptism the pastor will briefly communicate to the people.[2]

DEFINITION OF BAPTISM

With regard to its definition, although sacred writers give many to us, that which may be collected from the words of our Lord, recorded in the Gospel of St. John, and of the Apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians, appears the most appropriate: "Unless," says our Lord, "a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God";[3] and, speaking of the Church, the Apostle says, "cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life."[4] From these words, baptism may be accurately and appropriately defined: "The Sacrament of regeneration by water in the word." By nature we are born, from Adam, children of wrath; but by baptism we are regenerated in Christ, children of mercy; for He gave power to men "to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name, who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."[5]

IN WHAT THE SACRAMENT CONSISTS

But define baptism as we may, the faithful are to be informed that this Sacrament consists of ablution, accompanied necessarily, according to the institution of our Lord, by certain solemn words.[6] This is the uniform doctrine of the holy Fathers; a doctrine proved by the authority of St. Augustine. "The word," says he, "is joined to the element, and it becomes a Sacrament." That these are the constituents of baptism it becomes more necessary to impress on the minds of the faithful, so that they may not fall into the vulgar error of thinking that the baptismal water, preserved in the sacred font, constitutes the Sacrament. Then only is it to be called the Sacrament of Baptism when it is really

[1] De Ecc. Hier. c. 2.

[2] On the various names of Baptism, see Gregor Nazianz. orat. in sancta lumina; Clem. Alex. lib. 1, Poedag. cap. 6.

[3] John iii. 5.

[4] Eph. v. 26.

[5] John i. 12, 13.

[6] Matt. xxviii. 19.

used in the way of ablution, accompanied by the words appointed by our Lord.[1]

ITS MATTER

But as we said above, when treating of the Sacraments in general, that every Sacrament consists of matter and form, it is therefore necessary to point out what constitutes each of these in the Sacrament of Baptism. The matter, then, or element of this Sacrament, is any sort of natural water, which is simply and without qualification commonly called water, be it sea water, river water, water from a pond, well, or fountain. Our Lord has declared that "unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."[2] The Apostle also says that the Church was cleansed "by the laver of water";[3] and in the epistle of St. John we read these words: "There are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit, and the water, and the blood."[4] Scripture affords other proofs which establish the same truth. When, however, the Baptist says that the Lord will come who will baptize in the Holy Ghost, and in fire,[5] he is not to be understood to speak of the matter, but of the effect of baptism, produced in the soul by the interior operation of the Holy Ghost; or of the miracle performed on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles in the form of fire,[6] as was foretold by our Lord in these words: "John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence."[7]

FIGURE AND PROPHECIES OF THE MATTER OF BAPTISM

That water is the matter of baptism, the Almighty signified both by figures and by prophecies, as we know from holy Scripture. According to the prince of the Apostles, in his first epistle, the deluge which swept the world because "the wickedness of men was great on the earth," and "all the thought of their heart was bent upon evil,"[8] was a figure of the waters of baptism.[9]

[1] See Chrysost. hom. 24, in Joan.; Aug. lib. 6, contra Donatist. c. 25; CC. of Flor. and Trent; Aug. tract. 80 in Joan.

[2] John iii. 5. [3] Eph. v. 26. [4] 1 John v. 8.

[5] Matt. iii. 11. [6] Acts ii. 3. [7] Acts i. 5.

[8] Gen. vi. 5. [9] 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.

To omit the cleansing of Naaman the Syrian,[1] and the admirable virtue of the pool of Bethsaida,[2] and many similar types, manifestly symbolic of this mystery, the passage through the Red Sea, according to St. Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians, was typical of the waters of baptism.[3] With regard to the oracles of the prophets, the waters to which the prophet Isaias so freely invites all that thirst,[4] and those which Ezekiel saw in spirit, issue from the temple,[5] and also the "fountain" which Zachary foresaw, "open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: for the washing of the sinner, and of the unclean woman,"[6] were, no doubt, so many types which prefigured the salutary effects of the waters of baptism.

WHY WATER IS THE MATTER OF BAPTISM

The propriety of constituting water the matter of baptism, of the nature and efficacy of which it is at once expressive, St. Jerome, in his epistle to Oceanus, proves by many arguments.[7] Upon this subject, however, the pastor will teach that water, which is always at hand and within the reach of all, was the fittest matter of a Sacrament which is essentially necessary to all; and also, that water is best adapted to signify the effect of baptism. It washes away uncleanness, and is therefore strikingly illustrative of the virtue and efficacy of baptism, which washes away the stains of sin. We may also add that, like water which cools the body, baptism in a great measure extinguishes the fire of concupiscence in the soul.[8]

CHRISM, WHY USED IN BAPTISM

But although in case of necessity simple water unmixed with any other ingredient is sufficient for the matter of baptism, yet when administered in public with solemn ceremonies, the Catholic Church, guided by apostolic tradition, the more fully to express its efficacy, has uniformly observed the practice of adding

[1] 4 Kings v. 14. [2] John v. 2. [3] 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.
[4] Isaias lv. 1. [5] Ezek. xlvii. 1. [6] Zach. xiii. 1.
[7] epist. 85.
[8] On the matter of Baptism see CC. of Florence & Trent, sess. 7, can. 2; de consecrat. dist. 4; St. Thom. p. 3, q. 56, art. 5.

holy chrism.[1] And although it may be doubted whether this or that water be genuine, such as the Sacrament requires, it can never be matter of doubt that the proper and the only matter of baptism is natural water.

FORM OF BAPTISM TO BE CAREFULLY EXPLAINED

Having carefully explained the matter, which is one of the two parts of which the Sacrament consists, the pastor will show equal diligence in explaining the second, that is the form, which is equally necessary with the first. In the explanation of this Sacrament a necessity of increased care and study arises, as the pastor will perceive, from the circumstance that the knowledge of so holy a mystery is not only in itself a source of pleasure to the faithful, as is generally the case with regard to religious knowledge, but also very desirable for almost daily practical use. This Sacrament, as we shall explain in its proper place, is frequently administered by the laity, and most frequently by women; and it therefore becomes necessary to make all the faithful, indiscriminately, well acquainted with whatever regards its substance.

IN WHAT THE FORM CONSISTS, AND WHEN INSTITUTED

The pastor, therefore, will teach, in clear, unambiguous language, intelligible to every capacity, that the true and essential form of baptism is: "I BAPTIZE THEE IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST,"—a form delivered by our Lord and Saviour when, as we read in St. Matthew, he gave to His Apostles the command: "Going, . . . teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."[2] By the word "baptizing," the Catholic Church, instructed from above, most justly understands that the form of the Sacrament should express the action of the minister, and this takes place when he pronounces the words, "I baptize thee." Besides the minister of the Sacrament, the person to be baptized and the principal efficient cause

[1] Ambr. lib. 1, sacr. c. 2; Innoc. lib. 1, decr. tit. 1, c. 3.
[2] Matt. xxviii. 19.

of baptism should be mentioned. The pronoun "thee," and the names of the Divine Persons are therefore distinctly added; and thus the absolute form of the Sacrament is expressed in the words already mentioned: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Baptism is the work not of the Son alone, of whom St. John says, "He it is that baptizeth,"[1] but of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. By saying, however, "in the name," not names, we distinctly declare that in the Trinity there is but one nature and Godhead. The word "name" is here referred not to the persons, but to the divine essence, virtue, and power, which are one and the same in three Persons.[2]

WHAT ESSENTIAL, WHAT NOT ESSENTIAL

It is however to be observed, that of the words contained in this form, which we have shown to be the true and essential one, some are absolutely necessary — the omission of them rendering the valid administration of the Sacrament impossible; while others, on the contrary, are not so essential as to affect its validity. Of the latter kind is, in the Latin form, the word *ego* (I), the force of which is included in the word *baptizo* (I baptize). Nay more, the Greek Church, adopting a different manner of expressing the form, and being of opinion that it is unnecessary to make mention of the minister, omits the pronoun altogether. The form universally used in the Greek Church is: "Let this servant of Christ be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It appears, however, from the opinion and definition of the Council of Florence, that the Greek form is valid, because the words of which it consists sufficiently express what is essential to the validity of baptism, that is, the ablution which then takes place.

BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF CHRIST ONLY

If at any time the Apostles baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ only,[3] they did so, no doubt, by the inspiration of

[1] John i. 33.
[2] See Aug. contra Donatist. lib. 6, c. 25; St. Thom. p. 3, q. 66, art. 5.
[3] Acts ii. 38; viii. 16; x. 48; xix. 5.

the Holy Ghost, in order, in the infancy of the Church, to render their preaching in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ more illustrious, and to proclaim more effectually his divine and infinite power. If, however, we examine the matter more closely, we shall find that such a form omits nothing which the Saviour himself commands to be observed; for the name of Jesus Christ implies the Person of the Father by whom, and that of the Holy Ghost in whom, he was anointed. However, the use of this form by the Apostles becomes, perhaps, matter of doubt, if we yield to the opinions of Ambrose[1] and Basil,[2] holy Fathers eminent for sanctity and of paramount authority, who interpret "baptism in the name of Jesus Christ" as contradistinguished to "baptism in the name of John," and who say that the Apostles did not depart from the ordinary and usual form which comprises the distinct names of the three Persons. Paul also, in his epistle to the Galatians, seems to have expressed himself in a similar manner. "As many of you," says he, "as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ,"[3] meaning that they were baptized in the faith of Christ, and with no other form than that commanded by him to be observed.

BAPTISM MAY BE ADMINISTERED BY IMMERSION, POURING, OR SPRINKLING

What has been said on the principal points which regard the matter and form of the Sacrament will be found sufficient for the instruction of the faithful; but as in the administration of the Sacrament the legitimate ablution should also be observed, on this point too the pastor will explain the doctrine of the Church. He will briefly inform the faithful that, according to the common practice of the Church, baptism may be administered by immersion, infusion, or aspersion, and that administered in any of these forms it is equally valid. In baptism water is used to signify the spiritual ablution which it accomplishes, and on this account baptism is called by the Apostle a "laver."[4] This ablution takes place as effectually by immersion, which was for

[1] Ambr. lib. 1, de Spiritu Sancto, c. 3.
[2] Basil. lib. 1, de Spiritu Sancto. c. 12.
[3] Gal. iii. 27.
[4] Eph. v. 26.

a considerable time the practice in the early ages of the Church, as by infusion, which is now the general practice, or by aspersion, which was the manner in which Peter baptized, when he converted and gave baptism to about three thousand souls.[1] It is also a matter of indifference to the validity of the Sacrament whether the ablution is performed once or thrice. We learn from the epistle of St. Gregory the Great to Leander, that baptism was formerly and may still be validly administered in the Church in either way.[2] The faithful, however, will follow the practice of the particular Church to which they belong.

TWO IMPORTANT MATTERS TO BE OBSERVED IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM

The pastor will be particularly careful to observe that the baptismal ablution is not to be applied indifferently to any part of the body, but principally to the head, which is pre-eminently the seat of all the internal and external senses; and also that he who baptizes is to pronounce the words which constitute the form of baptism, not before or after, but when performing the ablution.

BAPTISM WHEN INSTITUTED

When these things have been explained, it will also be expedient to remind the faithful that, in common with the other Sacraments, baptism was instituted by Christ. On this subject the pastor will frequently point out two different periods of time which relate to baptism, — one the period of its institution by the Redeemer, the other, the establishment of the law which renders it obligatory. With regard to the former, it is clear that this Sacrament was instituted by our Lord when, being baptized by John, he gave to the water the power of sanctifying. St. Gregory Nazianzen[3] and St. Augustine testify that to the water was then imparted the power of regenerating to spiritual life. In another place St. Augustine says: "From the moment that Christ is immersed in water, water washes away all sins."[4] And again: "The Lord is baptized, not because he had

[1] Acts ii. 41.
[2] Greg. lib. i. regist. epist. 41.
[3] Greg. orat. in nat. Salvat. circa finem.
[4] Aug. serm. 29, 36, 37, de temp.

occasion to be cleansed, but in order that, by the contact of his pure flesh, He might purify the waters and impart to them the power of cleansing." The circumstances which attended the event afford a very strong argument to prove that baptism was then instituted by our Lord. The three persons of the most Holy Trinity, in whose name baptism is conferred, manifested their august presence; the voice of the Father was heard, the Person of the Son was present, the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove, and the heavens, into which we are enabled to enter by baptism, were thrown open.[1]

WATER CONSECRATED TO THE USE OF BAPTISM WHEN CHRIST WAS BAPTIZED

Should we ask how our Lord has endowed water with a virtue so great, so divine, this indeed is an inquiry which transcends the power of the human understanding. Yet this we do know, that when our Lord was baptized water was consecrated to the salutary use of baptism, and that, although instituted before the passion, it derived all its virtue and efficacy from the passion, which is the consummation, as it were, of all the actions of Christ.[2]

THE LAW OF BAPTISM, WHEN PROMULGATED

The second period to be distinguished, that is, when the law of baptism was promulgated, also admits of no doubt. The holy Fathers are unanimous in saying, that after the resurrection of our Lord, when he gave to his Apostles the command to go, and "teach all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,"[3] the law of baptism became obligatory on all who were to be saved. This is to be inferred from the words of St. Peter, that God "hath regenerated us unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead";[4] and also from the words of St. Paul that Christ "delivered himself up for it: [he speaks of the Church] that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life."[5] In both passages the obligation of

[1] Matt. iii. 16, 17; Mark i. 10, 11; Luke ii. 21, 22.
[2] See St. Jerome in com. in. 3 cap. Matt.; Aug. serm. 36 de temp.
[3] Mark xvi. 15; Matt. xxviii. 19.
[4] 1 Pet. i. 3.
[5] Eph. v. 25, 26.

baptism is referred to the time which followed the death of our Lord. These words of our Lord: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,"[1] refer also, no doubt, to the time subsequent to his passion. If then the pastor use all diligence in explaining these truths accurately to the faithful, it is impossible that they should not fully appreciate the high dignity of this Sacrament, and entertain towards it the most profound veneration, — a veneration which will be heightened by the reflection that the Holy Ghost, by his invisible agency, still infuses into the heart at the moment of baptism those blessings of incomparable excellence and of inestimable value which were so strikingly manifested by miracles at the baptism of Christ our Lord. Were our eyes, like those of the servant of Eliseus,[2] opened to see these heavenly things, who so insensible as not to be lost in rapturous admiration of the divine mysteries which baptism would then present to the astonished view! When, therefore, the riches of this Sacrament are unfolded to the faithful by the pastor, so as to enable them to behold them, if not with the eyes of the body, with those of the soul illumined by the light of faith, is it not reasonable to anticipate similar results?

Sermons

Baptism

BY THE RT. REV. ALEXANDER MACDONALD, D.D.

Baptism is the first of the Sacraments, the gate, as it were, by which we gain entrance into the kingdom of God. The Catechism of the Council of Trent briefly defines it as the Sacrament of rebirth by water in the word, and the definition is plainly founded on the words of Our Lord that are cited above. The Sacrament of Baptism cleanses us from original sin, and from actual sin, if such there be, makes us Christians, members of God's visible Church on earth, children of God and heirs of heaven. We are to consider the institution of baptism, the matter and the form, the effect, the minister, the subject and the ceremonies that hedge it round.

[1] John iii. 5. [2] 4 Kings vi. 17.

Our blessed Lord is of baptism, as of each of the other Sacraments, alone the author. Sacraments convey grace, and Our Lord as God, is the fountain source of all grace, and as man alone bought with His blood a title to saving grace. Therefore none but He can, in his own right, confer grace, whether with or without the sensible signs which we call Sacraments. He instituted baptism, so the Fathers tell us, on the day that He was Himself baptized by John in the Jordan. He then bestowed upon water a Sacramental efficacy: the cleansing from sin. But it was not till He had risen from the dead, when He charged His apostles to teach all nations, that He laid upon all the obligation of being baptized.

The matter of baptism is water, whether it be fresh or salt, from river or lake, from a well or from the clouds. Our Lord says "water" simply, and baptism in any water is therefore valid, but the Church requires that baptismal water should be blessed. There is a fitness in the choice of this element as the matter of baptism, for this Sacrament is necessary to salvation, and the matter used in conferring it should therefore be easily procurable in every quarter of the globe. Again, as the sacraments signify the grace which they confer, water most aptly signifies the effects of baptism. It has the property of cleansing, the property of cooling, and the property of clearness or transparency. Even so baptism cleanses the soul from sin, cools the ardor of concupiscence, and lets the clear light of faith into the soul.

The form of a Sacrament is that part of the sensible sign which signifies the effect of the Sacrament distinctly. It always consists of words, for words surpass every other sign or symbol in the clearness and distinctness with which they signify. The form of baptism, adapted from the words of Our Lord in the last chapter of St. Matthew is, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The form is, as it were, the soul of the Sacrament. And just as man is not soul alone, or body alone, but soul and body united in one, so the matter alone is not the Sacrament, nor the form alone, but matter and form united. Hence it is not enough to pour the water on without saying the words, or to say the words without pouring on the water; both must be done, as far as may be, at

the same time. It is important to note this, as any one may be called upon to christen a child in case of necessity. It would not do, in such a case, first to say the words and then pour on the water, or conversely. Still less would it do, as persons have been known to do through ignorance or under excitement, to pour on the water, saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," for the simple reason that this is not the form of baptism but the form of words used in making the sign of the cross. But suppose one were to omit a single word of the baptismal form, would the baptism be valid? That would depend altogether on the word omitted. If one should omit the article "the," for instance, the form would still be valid. But if one were to omit "I," or "thee," or "baptize," or "Son," it would not. Any omission which substantially changes the meaning of the form renders the Sacrament null. Or, to put it in another way, no word may be omitted which is needed to express the essential meaning of the form.

Baptism is necessary to salvation. The words of Our Lord are plain: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." These words, on the face of them, would seem to mean that heaven is forever closed to every one who has not received the baptism of water. Yet the Church has always taught that martyrdom supplies the place of baptism by water, and not only martyrdom but also an act of perfect contrition, with at least an implicit desire of baptism. But how is this to be reconciled with the plain words of Our Lord? In the first place, the meaning of these words has to be gathered not merely from the text itself and context, but from other passages of Scripture as well. Scripture cannot contradict Scripture, else would God contradict Himself. Now, in another passage of Scripture, Our Lord declares that every one who loses his life for His sake shall find it; and in yet another passage, when asked by the young man what he must do to obtain eternal life, replies: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart; . . . this do and thou shalt live." Suppose, then, a person believes in Jesus Christ, and is put to death for confessing this faith before he can be baptized, those words of Our Lord ensure him salvation: "He who loses his life for my sake shall

find it." Suppose, again, that one who has been instructed in the faith, and is sorry from his heart for his sins because they are displeasing to God, who is so good in Himself, dies suddenly before he can receive the Sacrament, the Church teaches that he is saved because he has fulfilled to the letter the conditions laid down by Our Lord Himself: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart."

There does not appear to be any good reason why we should not take "the kingdom of God," in the third chapter of St. John, to mean the visible society founded by Jesus Christ on earth, for this is the meaning the words bear in many passages of the Gospel. So understood, the words of Our Lord may be taken in their strict and literal sense, without limitation or exception, for no one can enter the Catholic Church except by baptism. He may have faith so as to move mountains, and an ardent love of God and his neighbors, but until the water of baptism has been poured on him he remains without the Church, in token of which the catechumens of old were kept without the churches during the solemn part of the Mass.

The baptism of water alone is a sacrament, and imprints a character. The baptism of blood has all the effects of the Sacrament, except the imprinting of the character. It cleanses from all sin, and frees from all the consequences of sin. Hence the Church has never prayed for martyrs, but always invoked their prayers.

On the day of our baptism we were born to a new life. We took vows to serve God as our only Lord and love Him as our Father. But these vows, alas! we have broken time and time again. We have left God the fountain of living water, and have hewed out unto ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. We have turned to false gods, have set up in our hearts the idol of self-love, of pride, or lust, or worldliness, as did the Israelites of old their golden calf, and have fallen down and worshipped it. But the Lord our God, whom we have vowed in baptism to serve, is charity itself, and charity, St. Paul tells us, is kind, is patient, is long-suffering. God is ever calling to us with a father's voice, if haply we shall hear Him, and turn from our sins, and prove ourselves faithful to our baptismal vows while

yet it is day; for the night cometh when no man can labor. "Now is the acceptable time; now are the days of salvation." Let us heed the call of God our Father in this holy season. Let us forsake the service of Satan, put on the livery of Christ, and, with the great apostle, fight the good fight, that, like him, we too may win a crown of glory.

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SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

SUBJECT

ANGELS AND DEMONS

TEXT

There was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me. —2 Cor. xii. 7.

The devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. — Luke viii. 12.

Analysis

Introduction. There are three reasons assigned in to-day's Gospel why the word of God, or the teachings of Christ, do not bear fruit in the hearts of men, namely, the devil, the flesh, and the world. That we are beset with temptations of the flesh from within, and the allurements of riches and pleasures in the world from without, no one will easily deny. But it is frequent in the present age to question the very existence, let alone the intervention in human affairs, of angels and demons. And yet an

invisible world of spirits which we do not see, as really exists as the visible world around us which we do see. It is important that we should reflect upon this doctrine of divine revelation.

I. Creation and trial of the angels. 1. Angels are pure spirits endowed with intellect and will; their number is exceedingly great, — "thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him" (Daniel vii. 10); our Lord spoke of "legions of Angels" (Matt. xxvi. 53). 2. The angels, like the rest of the universe, were created out of nothing; they were adorned from the beginning with grace. 3. Many of the angels rebelled and were cast into eternal punishment with their leader, the devil, who is also called Lucifer, or Satan. 4. The rest of the angels remained faithful and were granted the vision of God and confirmed in grace and glory.

II. Bad angels or demons are the enemy of man. 1. The devil was the tempter who caused the fall of our first parents and brought sin upon the whole race (Wisdom ii. 24); he also it was who tempted our Lord in the wilderness (Matt. iv. 3 ff.). 2. The demons also strive to injure mankind by external injuries and bodily annoyances, as they vexed holy Job and buffeted St. Paul (to-day's Epistle). At times they have even taken possession of the bodies of men, as we know from the New Testament. 3. But the demons chiefly seek the spiritual ruin of man. Their temptations are formidable (Eph. vi. 12), unwearied (1 Peter v. 8), audacious (Luke xxii. 31; Matt. iv. 1–9), crafty (2 Cor. xi. 14). To this end they try to take the word of God out of men's hearts, alluring them by novel teachings, by false apostles, by seeming miracles, as in Necromancy, Spiritism, etc. 4. The demons are actuated by hatred of God and jealousy of man. God permits them thus to harass men for the trial and greater victory of the just ("For which thing," etc. Epistle), and for the punishment of the wicked (1 Tim. i. 20; 1 Cor. v. 5).

III. Good angels are the Guardians of Men. 1. The good angels pray for us and rejoice over our prosperity. 2. Some of

them are commissioned by God to protect and guide us towards salvation. As a traveller through perilous ways is assisted by a faithful guide, so we are helped and defended by ministering spirits. 3. Sacred Scripture abounds in proof of the benefits, temporal and spiritual, conferred through guardian angels (Tobias; Acts xii. 7 ff.; Ps. xc. 11, 12). 4. The good angels are also the messengers of God to man (Luke i. 26; ii. 10; Mark xvi. 6, 7; Matt. ii. 13, etc.); the executors of His decrees (Acts xii. 23; Luke xvi. 22); they preside over nations and over the material world.

Conclusion. 1. Against the attacks of the evil spirits we should watch and pray (1 Peter v. 8), ever invoking the aid of our guardian angels. 2. To these latter we owe reverence (Gen. xviii. 2), gratitude (Exodus xxiii. 21; Tobias xii. 5), and confidence.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Parts I and IV

(See Fourth Sunday after Epiphany; Fifth Sunday after Easter in Dogmatic Series; and Palm Sunday and Ninth Sunday after Pentecost in Moral Series.)

Sermon

The Angels; Good and Bad Angels; Guardian Angels

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

(a) *The existence of Angels.*

The existence, dear brethren, of innumerable hosts of angels, of purely spiritual beings, created, as we ourselves were created, by the fiat of the Almighty word, yet more noble than we by nature, and higher in the scale of created things, is a truth that can be known to us with certainty only by means of some interposition from the other world, the world of spirits, to which they belong. Such interposition may take the form either of a divine revelation on the point, or of some sensible physical action exercised, with the divine command or permission, by angels themselves. Of such action, both by good and bad spirits, there

is evidence amply sufficient for those who are not prejudiced. There can be no doubt that instances have occurred, and still do occur, for example, of possession by the devil. Some of the phenomena of spiritism, which is attracting in the present day the morbid curiosity of many, cannot be attributed to anything but the malevolent and mischievous action of evil spirits. The history of the Church and the lives of the saints present to us, on the other hand, many well-attested instances of the action both of good and bad angels. But it may be doubted — and the scepticism in this matter of those who believe neither in Church nor Bible would appear to bear out the supposition — whether without the express teaching of the Church and of God's written word such occurrences as I have referred to would have been sufficient to prove with entire certainty to men in general the existence of purely spiritual beings.

But "we have a more sure word of prophecy." We are not left to the teaching of experiences which cavillers might always represent as deceptive, or due to unknown natural causes. God Himself, by the word of the inspired writers and through the mouth of His Church, has assured us of the fact of the existence of angels, good and evil.

In proposing, then, my dear brethren, to give you an instruction on the subject of the angels, I take it for granted that I am addressing an audience most of whom are firm believers in the authority and testimony of the Holy Catholic Church as the teacher of God's truth; and that those of you who are not Catholics believe, as we also do, in the Holy Scriptures as the very word of God Himself. Now there is scarcely a truth more plainly and more often written in the pages of the Bible, from beginning to end, than that of the existence of angels. Much, moreover, is there told us concerning their origin, their nature, their present state, and their occupations; so that if we believe in the Bible at all, we must believe in those beings of another world.

This particular teaching of the Church and the Holy Scriptures no more than any other has escaped the attacks of modern criticism. Unbelievers have endeavored to discredit the very strong testimony which we possess in the records of the Old Testament to the belief of the Jewish people on this subject, by representing

their doctrine concerning angels as having been borrowed by them from the heathen people among whom they lived in captivity, and particularly from the Persians. But it has not been difficult for Catholic and Christian scholars to show that the people of Israel had nothing to learn from other races on this matter. There is, it is true, a resemblance between the system of Persian mythology and that of the Holy Scriptures in regard to angels; but it is no more than a resemblance; and inspired authors of the Old Testament had written of angels long before their countrymen came into connection with the Persians. A similar objection has been made against the doctrine of angels as taught by the Christian Church. Christians, it is declared, borrowed many of their ideas on this subject from the old pagan religions of Greece and Rome. The only ground for this statement is found in a fact not always sufficiently taken into account, namely, that not in their doctrines, but in the *verbal* and *pictorial expressions* of their doctrines, the early Christians made use of symbolisms which they sometimes borrowed from the more innocent elements of the old religions. Thus an angel may be so represented in an early Christian painting as to be scarcely distinguishable from the figures of *Genii*, or the figures, for instance, of the goddess *Victory*. But a little examination will show that the resemblance is only external; that there is nothing in common between Christian teaching about angels, and the fanciful, if not evil, legends of heathendom.

Let us turn from such objections and ask what Holy Scripture tells us about the angels. In the very beginning of the Bible we read of the cherubim who guarded the entrance to Eden after the unhappy fall of our first parents. You will remember, too, the heaven-sent messengers who delivered Lot and his family from the wicked city of Sodom. The beautiful record of Jacob's dream has been familiar to you from your childhood; how "he saw in his sleep a ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven: the angels also of God ascending and descending by it" (Gen. xxviii. 12). Prophets in vision saw the heavenly country, and the throne of God surrounded by angels, made known to them, it is true, under various material forms and images, but nevertheless representing the truth. And that none

may doubt this, that none may suppose that the Old Testament imagery is nothing else than imagery, that there are no real spiritual beings who were represented to the prophets of old, Our Blessed Lord Himself and the sacred writers of the New Testament plainly teach the existence of a world of spiritual beings, created by God, of a higher order than men. "See that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 10). "I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance" (Luke xv. 10). "He that shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him the Son of man shall be ashamed, when he shall come in his majesty, and that of his Father, and of the holy angels" (Luke ix. 26). These are some of the passages in which Our Lord Himself speaks of the angels; nor must we forget those terrible words in which our Divine Teacher speaks also of the devil and *his* angels. If we look to the epistles, both of St. Paul and the other New Testament authors, we find the same truth constantly stated. "I think that God," writes St. Paul, "hath set forth us apostles, the last, as it were men appointed to death: we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men" (1 Cor. iv. 9). "Angels and powers and virtues," St. Peter declares, are made subject to Our Lord Jesus Christ in His glory (1 Pet. iii. 22). And in those marvellous visions of the heavenly country shown to St. John the Apostle, and written down by him in the Book of the Apocalypse, how great a part is played by the angels!

The teaching of the Church is explicit, as indeed it must needs be concerning a fact so plainly stated in God's written word. "God," declares the Vatican Council (Sess. III, cap. 1) "of his own free counsel, in the beginning of time created from nothing . . . both spiritual and corporeal creatures, angels, that is to say, and the world, and lastly man, composed of both body and soul."

(b) *The nature of Angels.*

What, then, is the nature of these beings. The Vatican Council speaks of them as "spiritual," and contrasts them with man, who is made up of matter as well as spirit. Everything that we

read about the angels in Holy Scripture makes it clear that they are not as we are. Except by means of some supernatural intervention, they are invisible to the eyes of the body. Had they bodily frames as we have, we should see them without the need of a miracle to enable us to do so. Not till his eyes were opened by the Lord, not otherwise, that is, than by some special intervention, was Balaam able to see the angel of the Lord. "Forthwith the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel, standing in the way with a drawn sword, and he worshipped him, falling flat on the ground" (Num. xxii. 31). The angel who appeared to Gedeon disappeared suddenly from his sight, by which fact he knew that it was an angel who had been speaking with him. "The angel of the Lord vanished out of his sight. And Gedeon seeing that it was the angel of the Lord, said: Alas, my Lord God: for I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face" (Judges vi. 21, 22).

To Tobias the angel Raphael declared that he eat only in appearance, that he had another, a spiritual, food and drink. "I seemed indeed to eat and to drink with you: but I use an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen by men. . . . And when he had said these things, he was taken from their sight, and they could see him no more" (Tob. xii. 19-21). The blessed, in the resurrection, Our Blessed Lord has told us, will be similar to the angels of God, precisely because they will be free from those trammels which are associated with flesh and blood in our present condition. "You err," He said to the Sadducees, "not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married; but shall be as the Angels of God in heaven" (Matt. xxii. 29, 30).

In the light of these and similar passages of Holy Scripture and with faithful adherence to her constant tradition, the Church teaches as a sure and certain point of Catholic doctrine that the angels are spirits; that they have nothing material about them. When they have appeared to men it has been by taking, for the time being, some visible appearance. It is not easy, indeed, for us to conceive of a being, an intelligent, powerful, noble being, under any form but that of a man. In other words, it is difficult for us to conceive what a spirit is. Nor is it within the scope of

this instruction to enter into an explanation of spiritual natures in general. Yet I may suggest, in passing, a few thoughts that may help us to form some idea of the angelic nature. What is it that is most powerful in man? What is it in man that has produced the greatest events, exercised the greatest influence in the history of the world and of mankind. Has it been brute force, or bodily strength? At first sight it might seem that at least in some periods of the world's history, and among barbarous peoples, this has been so. That it has been so at certain times and over a restricted area of time and place I would not deny. But what really great movement, what accomplishment lasting in its effects has been the outcome of mere brute bodily strength? Behind such movements and such effects we shall always find a master mind; a *will* and an *intelligence*, intelligence to know and foresee, the will to accomplish and to bend other wills to the accomplishment desired. And to which part of our nature do will and intelligence belong? To our *spiritual* part. And if we reflect, the body is a hindrance rather than a help. It has so many necessities; it is so soon fatigued; oft and again "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." For us, indeed, it is a necessary instrument for the accomplishment of most of our purposes, but one of which we should often like to be independent. An angel, dear brethren, is will and intelligence unhampered and untrammelled by the flesh. How often our soul sighs to be free from bodily hindrances; to feel no longer the fatigue and heaviness which oppress the bodily frame. Such is the condition of God's holy angels. And to take another thought; what intense activity may be exercised in the spiritual part of our nature while the body is still. What wide tracts we can range over in thought; what violent struggles can take place in our inmost souls; what burning desires, what joy, what deepest grief, what serenity, and what desolation our spirits can experience, yet none know by any external act what is taking place within. From our own inner experience, then, by multiplying a thousandfold the energies of our souls, we may gain some notion of the vast activities of those spirits whom God has created, unfettered by fleshly bond, to be His court and to do His behests. This, then, is another truth taught us by Holy Scripture and the Church, that

angels are purely spiritual, without any admixture of material and bodily elements.

(c) *Their origin.*

And these powerful spirits were created by God. This is a truth which we profess every time we recite the words of the creed which is said in Holy Mass: "Creator of all things visible and invisible." In those words we confess Almighty God to be the Creator of all things that are; of the invisible, spiritual world, as well as of the visible universe. The words of the Vatican Council, which I have already quoted to you: "God . . . in the beginning of time created from nothing . . . both spiritual and corporeal creatures," are but a more emphatic and explicit declaration of the words of the Nicene Creed, and of those still more ancient words of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth,"—of heaven, with its hosts of angels; of earth, with its manifold forms of life.

To sum up, then, the teaching of Church and Bible so far, we are plainly taught by Holy Scripture, and by the Church, who is the authorized exponent and interpreter of Scripture, that angels certainly exist, that they are entirely spiritual in their nature, and that they come forth, by creation out of nothing, from God the Author of all that is.

(d) *Good and Bad Angels.*

The Vatican Council, in the place from which I have already twice quoted, tells us what was the end which God had in view in creating all things. "God, of His goodness and by His almighty power, made creatures . . . not in order to increase His own blessedness, nor to acquire any perfection for Himself, but to manifest forth His perfections by the good which He has imparted to His creation" (*Loc. cit.*).

In other words, God made all things out of love; to make them sharers in His own goodness. Necessarily, also, He made them for His own honor and glory; for no more perfect end could He have than that, and, being perfect, He must have the most perfect end in view. But the Vatican Council here insists upon the fact that God's honor and glory involves the happiness of His creatures. Again, that happiness can only be assured to them by their loving and serving their good Father and Creator. It is

the destiny, then, of all free creatures of God to glorify Him, and to attain the happiness He offers to them, by loving Him and doing His will. And this end is to be carried out by each according to his place in God's creation. The angels were created especially to form the court of the King of heaven; to minister to Him in His own high sanctuary. This, too, is the teaching of Holy Scripture and the Church.

The holy Prophet Daniel saw in vision the Ancient of days. "His throne like flames of fire: the wheels of it like a burning fire. A swift stream of fire issued forth from before him: thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him." What a glorious destiny was that of the angels — to be the immediate attendants of the heavenly court; to surround the very throne of the Almighty God. Truly to hold such an office is to be a prince, higher and nobler by far than any prince among men. And so it is. The angels and princes; each has his own glorious throne and crown.

But, dear brethren, could we look into the inmost courts of the heavenly country, were we favored with the visions that entranced the souls of the prophets of old, we should see that now, in heaven, many angelic thrones stand empty, many glorious crowns have been cast down and trodden in the dust. What does this mean? It means that multitudes of the angelic host have fallen forever from their high estate, and have been hurled down with "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Those who fell, like those who stood firm, were created for God's glory and their own happiness. But God would have free and willing service, and to this end it was necessary that his glorious creatures, the angels, should be endowed with free-will, with the mastery over their own actions, with the power of choice between God's service or the worship and service of self. We can gather from Holy Scripture that the sin of the angels was a sin of immense and overweening pride. St. Paul, writing to his disciple Timothy, warns him not to elevate to the episcopate one who is a new convert, "but," he says, "being puffed up with pride, he fell into the judgment of the devil": into the judgment, that is, into which the devil himself fell. "Satan," writes St. Athanasius, "was not driven from heaven for a sin of fornication or

adultery or robbery; but *pride* cast him down into the lowest depths of the abyss." That the sin of the angels was a sin of pride is the common and universal teaching of fathers and doctors of the church. Of the details of that sin, how and in regard to what in particular the angels set themselves up in rebellion against the power of the Almighty, we do not know with certainty. Some great theologians have put forth as a probable conjecture that it was revealed to the angels that the Eternal Son would assume to Himself, and raise up to the very throne of God, a nature lower than their own, and that they were called upon to worship Him in that human nature, whereupon Satan, thinking that the angelic nature should have been thus honored, refused to adore, and drew innumerable hosts after him in his sin. But be that as it may, it is a truth of faith that the angels sinned; it is the unanimous doctrine of fathers and doctors that their sin was pride; and it is a truth of faith that they fell thereby into the misery of utter damnation and eternal banishment from God in the torments of hell. "And the angels," writes St. Jude (Jude vi), "who kept not their principality, but forsook their own habitation, he hath reserved under darkness in everlasting chains." "God," says St. Peter (*2* Pet. ii. 4), "spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, unto torments, to be reserved for torments."

What a lesson, dear brethren, for us! What a warning against sin; against pride especially, which indeed enters essentially into every mortal sin, since in every mortal sin the creature lifts himself against his Creator and declares, "*Nolo servire*—I will not serve Thee—I will do *my* will, not Thine!"

Alas for that unhappy fall! They who were glorious princes made themselves devils. From that time they have not ceased to hate God and all His works. By their fall they have not, however, lost all the powers that belong to angelic nature; and they exercise those powers, as far as God permits, for the destruction and ruin of man; anxious, if they can, to frustrate, in spite and envy, the merciful designs of God in regard to those favored creatures whose nature He Himself has condescended to take. Thanks be to God that, though for our trial and proba-

tion He permits them to tempt us, they can do us no harm unless we willingly give ourselves over to their evil suggestions. Armed with His divine grace, we can extinguish all the fiery darts of the evil one. On our side are the hosts of those who remained faithful; who passed successfully through the trial of temptation; who are now enjoying, without possibility of falling, the vision of God in heaven, and who, by His merciful providence, guard and guide and assist us in our warfare upon earth.

(e) *The ministry of the Angels. Guardian Angels.*

We have seen what is the office of the angels in regard to God. They are the attendants of His heavenly court; they cease not to worship and adore Him day and night, saying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts. But He has given them also duties in regard to us. They are His messengers; they have charge of the Holy Church, of kingdoms and nations, and, moreover, of individuals. It is the teaching of Holy Church that at least each of the faithful enjoys the protection and aid of an angel guardian; and it is not in any way contrary to Holy Scripture to suppose that every child of man is thus protected. From the beginning the Catholic Church has honored the holy angels, has invoked them and solicited their aid; and it behooves us, dear brethren, to follow this example by being devout to our guardian angel. How consoling is the thought of princes of the heavenly court charged with the care of our souls and bodies; ever at hand to ward off temptation; to repulse the demons, to suggest good and holy thoughts, to protect us from bodily danger and accidents in our coming and going; to stand by us and care for us till at last they shall joyfully present our souls, redeemed and cleansed, before the throne of God to receive the reward. We should examine ourselves to see whether we have neglected and forgotten our angel guardian. It is to our interest to invoke him; to second his efforts by our earnest endeavors to avoid sin. How often we frustrate those endeavors by wilfully running into temptation! It is a matter of common gratitude, too, that we should remember him who has the charge of us; that we should thank him for his care, that we should try to live more in his presence. It is needless to say that the greatest spiritual good must be the result of such a practice. Remembering the presence of our guardian

angel, we shall remember also the presence of God. We shall thereby be supported in temptation and restrained from sin; we shall be consoled in affliction and kept temperate in the time of joy: cultivating the friendship of our celestial companion we shall be kept from harmful affection for the creatures of earth; more than any earthly guide and counsellor he will teach and lead us along the heavenly way, until the veil is taken from our eyes, and we shall behold at the last the angel of the Lord with whom we shall praise and bless the Father of us both forever in heaven.

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QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

SUBJECT

THE SUFFERINGS OF OUR LORD

TEXT

Then Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. — Luke xviii. 31–33.

Analysis

Introduction. Our Lord with the twelve Apostles was on His way to Jerusalem for the last time. It was the final year of the public ministry. In the previous year the Saviour had twice foretold His coming passion and death, and now for the third

time He predicts it, and reminds the twelve, who did not understand Him, that His imminent sufferings had been foretold by the prophets.

I. The prophecies of Our Lord's sufferings. 1. Types were: Abel, slain by his brother; Isaac, offered in sacrifice by his father; the paschal lamb; the brazen serpent, etc. 2. Prophecies are found in Psalms ii, xxi, lxvi, and in Isa. liii, etc.

II. The fulfillment of the prophecies. 1. "He suffered." The chief sufferings of our Lord's Passion were: the agony, the sweat of blood, the betrayal by Judas and the abandonment by the Apostles, the scourging at the pillar, the crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross. 2. "Under Pontius Pilate." Pontius Pilate was the Roman Governor of Judea (A.D. 27–37); he is named in the Creed in order to show the fulfilment of our Lord's prediction in to-day's Gospel that He Himself would be delivered to the Gentiles. Pilate was a Gentile, and it was he who condemned our Lord to death. 3. "Was crucified." Christ chose to be crucified because this form of death was the most painful and ignominious.

Conclusion. 1. It is important frequently to reflect and meditate on the passion of Christ, because nothing could show us more clearly the great value of our own souls, which cost such a price, and the extraordinary love which God has for us. 2. As a means of promoting such meditation let us make frequent use of such devotions as the five sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary, the stations of the cross, and the like.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article IV of the Creed

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.

Necessity of a knowledge and frequent exposition of this article

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified. How necessary a knowledge of this Article, and how assiduous the pastor should

be in stirring up in the minds of the faithful the frequent recollection of our Lord's passion, we learn from the apostle when he says that he knows nothing but Christ and Him crucified.[1] In illustrating this subject, therefore, the greatest care and pains should be taken by the pastor that the faithful, excited by the remembrance of so great a benefit, may be entirely devoted to the contemplation of the goodness and love of God towards us.

WHAT THIS PART OF THE ARTICLE PROPOSES FOR OUR BELIEF

The first part of this Article (of the second we shall treat hereafter) proposes for our belief that when Pontius Pilate governed the province of Judea, under Tiberius Caesar, Christ the Lord was nailed to a cross. Having been seized as a malefactor, mocked, outraged, and tortured in various forms, He was finally crucified.

Nor can it be a matter of doubt that His soul, as to its inferior part, was sensible of these torments; for as He really assumed human nature, it is a necessary consequence that He really, and in His soul, experienced a most acute sense of pain. Hence these words of the Saviour: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death."[2] Although human nature was united to the divine person, He felt the bitterness of His passion as acutely as if no such union had existed, because in the one person of Jesus Christ were preserved the properties of both natures, human and divine; and therefore what was passible and mortal remained passible and mortal; and again, what was impassible and immortal, that is His divine nature, continued impassible and immortal.

WHY THE TIME OF THE PASSION IS SPECIALLY RECORDED

But if we find it here recorded with such historical minuteness that Jesus Christ suffered when Pilate was procurator of Judea,[3] the pastor will explain the reason, — it is, that by fixing the time, as the apostle does, in the sixth chapter of his First Epistle to Timothy, so important and so necessary an event may be ascertained by all with greater certainty; and to show that the

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 2.
[2] Matt. xxvi. 38; Mark xiv. 34.
[3] 1 Tim. vi. 13.

event verified the prediction of the Saviour: "They shall deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified."[1]

WHY CHRIST DIED ON A CROSS

That He suffered the particular death of the cross is also to be traced to the economy of the divine councils, "that whence death came, thence life might arise." The serpent, which overcame our first parents by the fruit of the tree, was himself overcome by Christ on the wood of the cross. Many reasons, which the holy Fathers have evolved in detail, may be adduced to show the congruity of the Saviour's having suffered the death of the cross rather than any other; but it is enough that the faithful be informed by the pastor that that species of death, because confessedly the most ignominious and humiliating, was chosen by the Saviour as most consonant and best suited to the plan of redemption; for not only among the Gentiles was the death of the cross deemed execrable and loaded with disgrace and infamy, but also among the Jews; for in the law of Moses the man is pronounced accursed who hangeth on a tree.[2]

HISTORICAL PART OF THIS ARTICLE NOT TO BE OMITTED

But the historical part of this Article, which has been narrated by the Holy Evangelists with the most minute exactness, is not to be omitted by the pastor, in order that the faithful may be familiarly acquainted with at least the principal heads of this mystery, which are of more immediate necessity to confirm the truth of our faith. For on this Article, as on a sort of foundation, rest the religion and faith of Christians, and on this foundation, when once laid, the superstructure rises with perfect security. If any other truth of Christianity presents difficulties to the mind of man, the mystery of the cross must, assuredly, be considered to present still greater difficulties. We can scarcely be brought to think that our salvation depends on the cross, and on Him who for us was fastened to its wood. But in this, as the apostle says, we may admire the supreme wisdom of divine providence: "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world, by wisdom, knew not God, it pleaseth God, by the foolishness

[1] Matt. xx. 19. [2] Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13.

of *our* preaching, to save them that believe."[1] We are not, therefore, to be surprised that the Prophets, before the coming of Christ, and the apostles after His death and resurrection, labored so industriously to convince mankind that He was the Redeemer of the world, and to bring them under the power and obedience of Him who was crucified.

FIGURES AND PROPHECIES OF THE PASSION AND DEATH OF THE SAVIOUR

Knowing, therefore, that nothing is so far above the reach of human reason as the mystery of the cross, Almighty God, immediately from the fall of Adam, ceased not, both by figures and by the oracles of the Prophets, to signify the death by which His Son was to die. Not to dwell on these figures, Abel who fell a victim to the envy of his brother,[2] Isaac who was commanded to be offered in sacrifice,[3] the lamb immolated by the Jews on their departure from Egypt,[4] and also the brazen serpent lifted up by Moses in the desert,[5] were all figures of the passion and death of Christ the Lord. That this event was foretold by many Prophets is a fact too well known to require development here. Not to speak of David, whose Psalms embrace the principal mysteries of redemption,[6] the oracles of Isaias are so clear and graphic[7] that he may be said rather to have recorded a past than predicted a future event.[8]

Sermons

Prophecies Relating to Our Lord's Passion

BY CANON J. S. RICHTER

God is eternal, and His eye discerns all that is still hidden from us in the future, while it also searches the hearts of all His creatures. No man can know what God discovers there, unless by special revelation, such as is vouchsafed to His ambassadors, whose prophetic utterances convey the knowledge to others. God does not speak in words only, but also in deeds, deeds which He

[1] 1 Cor. i. 21. [2] Gen. iv. 8. [3] Gen. xxii. 6–8.
[4] Exod. xi. 5–7. [5] Num. xxi. 8, 9; John iii. 14.
[6] Psalms ii, xxi, lxvi, cix. [7] Is. liii. [8] St. Jerome, Epist. ad Paulin.

alone performs and of which He determines the significance. These deeds we call types; they are, as it were, pictures of what will eventually take place; and prophecies and types go together, because both come from God, and together form the signature that He sets upon the credentials of His ambassadors. Both refer in an especial manner to the one great Ambassador, whose path was prepared by all the other prophets, namely, the only begotten Son of God, our Lord and Saviour, whose lifework was our redemption. The Gospel tells us that towards the close of His life our Lord hid Himself, and that is why the Church covers up His figure on the Crucifix for the last fortnight of Lent, although He ought to be continually in our thoughts at this time. In a somewhat similar fashion our Saviour's figure is concealed in the prophecies and types of the Old Testament; let us consider it to-day as God revealed it to His people ages before our Lord's coming. St. Bernard tells us that there are three points of which we ought not to lose sight in meditating upon the Passion; viz.: What did Christ suffer? How did He suffer? Why did He suffer? The prophets will answer these questions.

I. They tell us in great detail precisely *what* Christ was to suffer. All men were to conspire against Him. "Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together, against the Lord, and against his Christ" (Ps. ii. 1, 2). But how could they hope to seize one who, whenever He chose, cast blindness upon them and vanished? They had recourse to treachery: "The man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, hath greatly supplanted me" (Ps. xl. 10). "If he that hated me had spoken great things against me, I would perhaps have hidden myself from him. But thou a man of one mind, my guide, and my familiar, who didst take sweetmeats together with me: in the house of God we walked with consent" (Ps. liv. 13-15). Thirty pieces of silver were weighed out to the traitor (Zach. xi. 12), and false witnesses came forward so that sentence was given against Him, and He was condemned to a most shameful death. They pierced His Hands and Feet and numbered all His bones; they parted His garments among them, and for His vesture they cast lots; they gave Him vinegar to drink, and at last He re-

sembled a worm, and no man; He was the reproach of men and the outcast of the people; all they that saw Him laughed Him to scorn, saying: "He hoped in the Lord, let him deliver him" (Ps. xxi and lxviii). At last He opens His mouth and cries: "O God, my God, look upon me: why hast thou forsaken me?" "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that the sun shall go down at midday, and I will make the earth dark in the day of light" (Amos viii. 9). You all know this story, but every detail was foretold by David and Isaias, the one over a thousand, and the other six or seven hundred years before our Lord's birth. The Evangelists have recorded how their prophecies were fulfilled, and it is impossible to suppose that He of whom such wonderful things were predicted was merely an ordinary human being; God Himself could hardly prove more clearly that the one who suffered such indignities was He of whom Isaias said that God Himself would come and save us (Is. xxxv. 4).

II. God told us *how* our Redeemer would suffer, as well as the kind of His sufferings. Let us call to mind how Abraham and Isaac, the son of the promise, went to Mount Moria. God had called Abraham and said: "Take thy only begotten son Isaac, whom thou lovest . . . and offer him for an holocaust upon one of the mountains which I will show thee." They set out without delay, Isaac carrying the wood for the holocaust, and Abraham bearing fire and a sword. Isaac asked where the victim was, and Abraham replied that God would provide Himself a victim for a holocaust. Having reached the place which God had shown him, he built an altar and laid the wood in order upon it; and when he had bound Isaac, he laid him on the wood; then, putting forth his hand he took the sword to sacrifice his son. But God did not desire the boy's death and was satisfied with this proof of Abraham's obedience. Isaac was, however, a type of another sacrifice, another son of the promise, and Moria was a type of Golgotha, as Isaac was of Christ. Our Lord bore His Cross just as Isaac had carried the wood, but there was no need for Him to ask where the victim was. He had already said: "A body thou hast fitted to me: . . . Behold I come" (Heb. x. 5, 7), and He clasped in His arms the cross on which He was about to die.

He went like a lamb to the slaughter, not opening His mouth, and when He came to the place, He allowed Himself to be nailed to the cross without uttering a word of protest. This time the blow was really struck, and Christ, the second Isaac, was slain; He did not resist, but gave His Body to the strikers; He turned not away His face from them that rebuked Him and spat upon Him. He was offered because it was His own holy will (Is. l and liii).

We cannot without emotion think of Isaac lying bound upon the altar of sacrifice, but surely our hearts should be touched still more when we think of Christ, the only begotten Son of God, hanging on the cross, willing and eager to be a sacrifice for our sins.

III. Lastly, the prophets tell us *why* Christ was to suffer. In speaking of the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with infirmity, Isaias says: "Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: . . . he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Is. liii. 4–6). Any one reading these words must be reminded of the sin-offerings in the Levitical law, the victims on whom the priests laid the sins of the people. He will be reminded, too, of the Paschal lamb, whose blood was sprinkled on the doorposts of the Israelites, and of the brazen serpent in the wilderness. The people had murmured against God, and to punish them He sent serpents among them, which bit them and killed many. The Israelites in dismay came to Moses, saying, "We have sinned, . . . pray that he [the Lord] may take away these serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to him: Make a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign: whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live. Moses therefore made a brazen serpent, . . . which when they that were bitten looked upon, they were healed (Num. xxi. 7–9). The Israelites represent the human race; the desert is the world. Ever since our first parents listened to the serpent in Paradise, the brood of noxious reptiles has been multiplying, and now they are all around us, watching for an oppor-

tunity to assail us and set their poisonous fangs into our souls. There are serpents of pride, envy, hatred, intemperance, impurity, doubt, and despair. Who can heal a soul once wounded by any of these? "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John iii. 14). He hung on the cross, sinless though He was, and desired that the blood flowing from His wounds should heal us; but just as the Israelites had to look at the brazen serpent, so must we look up at Christ with faith and love. The Jews watched Him hanging on the cross, but it did them no good, for they did not believe in Him. The penitent thief received forgiveness, for he had unbounded confidence in our Lord's goodness and mercy. Our Saviour Himself promised, if He were lifted up from the earth, to draw all men to Him; may He draw us and give us pardon and the kiss of peace! This, my brethren, is the meaning of the brazen serpent — it is a type of the mystery of the cross, a type devised by God long before the crucifixion. *O Crux, ave!* Christ Himself foretold the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. For instance, before His last journey to Jerusalem, as we read in to-day's Gospel, He said to His disciples: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: And after they have scourged him, they will put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again" (Luke xviii. 31–33). Yes, our Lord foretold His resurrection as well as His death, but even the darkest depths of His shame are lighted up by the Divine power and wisdom — the wisdom that so wonderfully foresaw all that would come to pass, and the power that fulfilled all predictions. Thus in Passiontide we see the Man of Sorrows with the glory of heaven shining on Him. Let us think how much He suffered, and with what inexhaustible patience, remembering that it was all for us, for every one of us, to make atonement for our sins and to obtain for us strength to avoid sin in future. Listen to the voice of Holy Church, who reminds us how the prophecies and types of the Old Testament were fulfilled most perfectly during our Saviour's passion. But the Church shows us another picture and a still sadder one, for

it represents ourselves. The sinful, ungrateful city of Jerusalem is a type of us, and it is to us that the words are addressed: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, O turn thee to the Lord thy God." Let us obey the call. Amen.

The Passion of Christ

BY THE REV. J. R. NEWELL, O.P.

From the liturgical offices and prayers of the Church during the approaching Lent it is evident that her mind and heart are entirely occupied throughout the holy season with the memory of our Saviour's redeeming Passion — the sufferings by which Jesus drank for us to the very dregs the bitter chalice of woe.

To-day the Church selects the portion of the Gospel just read in order to direct our thoughts betimes, as Jesus directed the minds of His Apostles, to the great mystery of our Redemption. We shall therefore be in harmony with the spirit of the Church if we devote a few moments this morning to some considerations on the Passion of Christ. That adorable Passion — the last phase in the earthly life of Jesus — is the greatest and most fruitful of devotions. There we see how much God loved us, and we are powerfully drawn to love Him in return; and love is the direct way to God and to all moral power and wisdom. There we see exemplified the fundamental virtues of the Christian life, — humility, obedience, constancy, and justice; and there we learn to shun sin with horror, seeing the tremendous price that was paid for our deliverance from it, even the precious Blood of a God-man.

In meditating on the Passion of Jesus we should bear in mind that His sufferings were pre-ordained by God for our redemption. Our relation to God is of a moral and religious character; and by our fall from original grace we were spiritually outcast from Him, and were amenable to the claims of His infinite retributive justice; and that divine Justice, for its own due satisfaction and our redemption, decreed the sufferings of the Incarnate Son of God. As St. Leo expresses it: "Unless Jesus were man He could not suffer; unless He were God His sufferings could bring us no remedy."

This divine plan of redemption was revealed to mankind in the hour of our fall, and the revelation of it was repeated throughout the ages. It was prefigured in the immolation of Isaac; in the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, and in the setting up of the Brazen Serpent in the desert for the healing of the penitent. It was the chief theme of the prophets. Speaking of the promised Messias, Isaias said: "All we like sheep had gone astray, . . . but the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. . . . He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows. . . . He was immolated because he willed it, . . . and by his stripes we were healed. . . . He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, not opening his mouth. . . . I beheld him a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our sins." And Daniel said: "Thus saith the Lord, seventy weeks of years"—four hundred and ninety years—"are set from the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the City and the Temple, when the Christ shall appear. . . . And he shall be slain, and iniquity shall be atoned. . . . And his people that shall deny him shall be his no more." Again: the Royal Prophet portrayed the Messias grieving and praying in His atoning sorrows: "O God, my God, look upon me . . . the sins of my people cry out upon me . . . our fathers hoped in thee and were delivered. . . . Save my soul from the jaws of the wicked. . . . All the ends of the earth shall remember and shall be converted to thee." And Jeremias: "All ye that pass by the way attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow." Jesus cited these prophecies and predicted their approaching fulfilment in Himself at the hands of the Jews in Jerusalem. And He found there ready at hand all the elements that were to contribute to the accomplishment of His death; for He found a degenerate people; a dominant class of proud and avaricious pharisees; a cowardly Gentile ruler, and a traitorous disciple—a Judas. Amid such conditions His Passion was inevitable in view of the abasement enacted by His Incarnation and of the revelation of His Divinity to men determined not to believe Him. His own testimony to Himself gave them the power to accuse and condemn Him.

The sorrows of Jesus were unfathomable, as they sprang from

His knowledge and His love. From His knowledge of God, for His human Soul possessed the immediate vision of the Divine Essence — of the face of God. From His knowledge of mortal sin, for He comprehended its immeasurable heinousness as an infinite affront to God. From His love for God and for man, by which He embraced both, and sought, with all the might of a God-man, to reconcile and unite the adorable Creator and His erring creature. His sufferings were intense beyond comprehension, both from His surpassing sensitiveness and the boundless cruelty of the Jews; and He was buffeted in the face, dragged about, thrown down, scourged, crowned with thorns, mocked, execrated, spit upon, and crucified.

To Jesus, therefore, the Divine Victim and hero of eternal justice and love, who for the honor of God and human redemption gave His precious life for all and each of us, let us render grateful and loving sympathy by the avoidance of sin and the constant remembrance of His passion. Let us be imbued with the spirit of the Cross. It is the science of the Saints. It fired the Apostles with the love and intrepidity that converted the world. It sustained the martyrs in their heroic testimony for the faith, and it inspired the works of benevolence and charity that have dignified and blessed human society throughout the Christian ages. Let no one shrink from partaking in the sorrows and humiliation of the Cross of Christ. He, the Incarnate God, has stripped it of all its ignominy and woe, and has made it to be for all who embrace it the source of divinest honor and glory. So teaches St. Paul: "If we suffer with Christ we shall also be glorified with Him." And St. Peter: "This is thanksworthy; for unto this are you called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps. . . . Christ therefore having suffered for us be you also armed with the same thought." And let this saving thought, which is our faith, find expression in devotion, and bring us all together during Lent to make the way of the Cross and to attend daily, if possible — at Holy Mass, which is the perpetuation of the heroic Passion and death of Jesus — the unbloody sacrifice of the same living glorious victim who died for our redemption in Calvary.

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FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

SUBJECT

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

TEXT

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry. . . . And behold angels came and ministered to him. — MATT. iv. 2, 11.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. Christ in to-day's Gospel rejected the devil's proposal to change stones into bread to satisfy His hunger, and later He received food through the ministration of Angels. Our souls in this life are frequently tempted with the food offered by the evil one, which consists in forbidden pleasures and satisfactions; but against this table of devils Christ has prepared for our souls the food of Angels in the Holy Eucharist.

I. Institution of the Holy Eucharist. 1. At the synagogue in Capharnaum a year before His death our Lord promised His disciples and the Jews that He would give them His flesh to eat and His blood to drink (John vi). 2. This promise the Saviour fulfilled the night before He suffered when, at the Last Supper, He changed bread and wine into His body and blood and gave to His disciples, empowering them and their successors to do what He had done. 3. Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist after

the Paschal meal in order to show that the ancient law had now given way to the New Law, the shadow to the reality. This took place on the eve of our Lord's death, because the Eucharist was His last bequest to the world.

II. The names by which the Holy Eucharist is designated. 1. **Eucharist** signifies **grace** or **thanksgiving.** This Sacrament contains the Author of Grace Himself, and it was instituted with an act of thanksgiving. 2. **Communion** signifies that this is the Sacrament of unity and charity. 3. **Viaticum** signifies that the Holy Eucharist is the food of our mortal pilgrimage and the preparation for our eternal life.

III. The Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament. 1. Three things are required for a sacrament: (a) institution by Christ; (b) a sensible sign; (c) inward grace. The Holy Eucharist was instituted by Christ, as said above; its sensible sign consists in the species of bread and wine; its inward grace is a special union with Christ. 2. The Holy Eucharist has at all times from its institution been regarded as a true Sacrament, as we know from tradition and the inspired writers. 3. The Holy Eucharist differs from other Sacraments in that it is permanent, whereas they are transient; its elements are changed, whereas the elements of the other Sacraments remain. 4. The Eucharist, although consisting of the two elements of bread and wine, is but one Sacrament, since it signifies but one thing, namely, the nourishment of the soul. 5. The Eucharist calls to mind three things: (a) the passion of Christ in the flesh, of which it is the commemoration; (b) the grace of spiritual nourishment, of which it is the cause, in the present; (c) eternal glory in the future, of which it is the pledge.

Conclusion. 1. To the Eucharist are due the greatest honor and reverence, which should be manifested by frequently receiving Holy Communion, by devout prayers and genuflections, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, proper behavior in Church, etc. 2. Meditation on the Holy Eucharist should raise the mind to the heavenly mysteries which it contains, represents, and foreshadows.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part II

The Sacrament of the Eucharist

DIGNITY OF THE EUCHARIST

Of all the sacred mysteries bequeathed to us by our Lord as unfailing sources of grace, there is none that can be compared to the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. For no crime, therefore, is there reserved by God a more terrible vengeance than for the sacrilegious abuse of this adorable Sacrament, which is replete with holiness itself.[1] The Apostle, illumined with wisdom from above, clearly saw and emphatically announced these awful consequences, when, having declared the enormity of their guilt who discern not "the body of the Lord," he immediately added, "therefore are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep."[2] That the faithful, therefore, deeply impressed with the divine honor due to this heavenly Sacrament, may derive from its participation abundant fruit of grace and escape the just anger of God, the pastor will explain with indefatigable diligence all those things which seem best calculated to display its majesty.

ITS INSTITUTION

Following the example of St. Paul, who declares to the Corinthians what he had received from the Lord, the pastor will begin by explaining to the faithful the circumstances of its institution. These he will find thus clearly recorded by the Evangelist: our Lord, who "having loved his own . . . loved them to the end,"[3] to give them some admirable and divine pledge of this His love, aware that the hour was come when He should pass out of this world to the Father, by an effect of wisdom which transcends the order of nature, devised a means of being always present with His own. Having celebrated the feast of the paschal lamb with His disciples, that the figure might give way to the reality, the shadow to the substance, "Jesus took bread," and giving thanks to God, "blessed and broke: and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat. This is my body, which shall be delivered for you: do this for a commemoration of me." And taking the

[1] Dionys. de Eccl. Hier, c. 6; et de consec. dist. c. 2, nihil in.
[2] 1 Cor. xi. 30. [3] John xiii. 1.

chalice also after he had supped, he said, "This chalice is the new testament in my blood: this do, as often as you shall drink it in commemoration of me."[1]

WHY CALLED "THE EUCHARIST"

Satisfied that language could supply no one word sufficiently comprehensive to give full expression to the dignity and excellence of this Sacrament, sacred writers have endeavored to express it by a variety of appellations. It is sometimes called the "Eucharist," a word which may be translated "good grace," or "thanksgiving." The propriety of the first translation appears from two considerations: the Eucharist gives a foretaste of eternal life, of which it is written: "The grace of God [is] life everlasting."[2] It also contains Christ our Lord, the true grace, and the source of all heavenly gifts. The other translation is no less appropriate, for when we offer this most spotless victim, we render to God a homage of infinite value in return for all the benefits which we have received from His bounty, particularly for the inestimable treasure of grace bestowed on us in this Sacrament. The word "thanksgiving," also accords with the conduct of our Lord when instituting this mystery: "Taking bread, he brake it, and *gave thanks*."[3] David too, contemplating the grandeur of this mystery, says: "He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord: he hath given food to them that fear him";[4] but he had premised these words of *thanksgiving* with, "His work is praise and magnificence."[5]

THE EUCHARIST IS ALSO CALLED "SACRIFICE," "COMMUNION"

The Eucharist is also frequently called the "Sacrifice," of which we shall treat more at large in the subsequent part of this exposition. It is also called "Communion," a word borrowed

[1] Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24. On the institution of the Eucharist, see C. Trent, Sess. 13, c. 2, de Euch.; Leo, serm. 7, de Pass. c. 3; Euseb. Emiss. hom. 4; de consec. dist. 2, l, quia corpus.

[2] Rom. vi. 23.

[3] Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24.

[4] Ps. cx. 4, 5.

[5] Ps. cx. 3. Chrysost. hom. 24, in 1 ad Cor. ad haec verba, Calix benedictionis; Cypr. lib. de lapsis.; Ambr. lib. 5, de Sacr. c. 3; St. Th. p. 3, q. 73, a. 4.

from the Apostle, when he says: "The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?"[1]

THE "SACRAMENT OF PEACE AND CHARITY"

"This Sacrament," to use the words of Damascene, "unites us to Christ, and renders us partakers of his flesh, and of his divinity, reconciles us to each other in the same Christ, and consolidates us as it were into one body."[2] Hence it is also called the "Sacrament of peace and charity," giving us to understand how unworthy the name of Christians are they who indulge in enmity; and that hatred, discord, and strife are to be banished from the society of the faithful, as their worst enemies. This obligation becomes still more imperative when we reflect that in the daily oblation of the sacred mysteries we profess to study with watchful solicitude to preserve peace and charity inviolate.

ALSO CALLED "VIATICUM"

Sacred writers also frequently call it the "Viaticum," as well because it is the spiritual food by which we are supported during our mortal pilgrimage, as also because it prepares for us a passage to eternal happiness and everlasting glory. Hence, in accordance with the ancient practice of the Church, none of the faithful are suffered to depart this life without being previously fortified with this living bread from heaven.

THE "SUPPER"

The name of the "Supper" has also been sometimes given to this Sacrament by the most ancient Fathers, in imitation of the Apostle,[3] because it was instituted by our Lord at the saving mystery of the Last Supper.[4]

[1] 1 Cor. x. 16.

[2] Damasc. lib. 4, de fid. orthod. c. 4. See Iren. lib. 5, c. 7; Chrys. hom. 44 et 45 in Joan.; Cyrill. in lib. 7, in Joan. c. 13; St. Cyril of Jerusalem Catech. 4; Aug. Tract. 26, in Joan.; C. Trent, sess. 13, de Euchar. in proef. Concil. Nicoen. 21, Cart. 4, c. 77 et 26, q. 6, passim.

[3] 1 Cor. xi. 20.

[4] Cypr. de coena. Domini.

THE EUCHARIST TO BE CONSECRATED AND RECEIVED FASTING

This circumstance, which regards the time of its institution, does not, however, justify the inference that the Eucharist is to be consecrated or received by persons not fasting. The salutary practice of consecrating and receiving it fasting, introduced, as ancient writers record, by the Apostles, has always been observed in the Church.[1]

The Eucharist a Sacrament

Having thus premised an explanation of the names by which this Sacrament is distinguished, the pastor will teach that it has all the qualities of a true Sacrament, and is one of the seven which have been at all times recognized and revered by the Catholic Church. Immediately after the consecration of the chalice, it is called "a mystery of faith"; and, to omit an almost innumerable host of sacred writers, vouchers of the same doctrine, that the holy Eucharist is a Sacrament is demonstrated by the very nature of a Sacrament. It has sensible and outward signs: it signifies and produces grace in the soul; and all doubt as to its institution by Christ is removed by the Apostle and the Evangelists. These circumstances, combining as they do to establish the truth of the Sacrament, do away with the necessity of pressing the matter by further argument.[2]

THE NAME OF SACRAMENT, GIVEN TO MANY THINGS IN THE EUCHARIST, STRICTLY APPLIES TO THE SPECIES ONLY

That in the Eucharist there are many things to which sacred writers have occasionally given the name of Sacrament, the pastor will particularly observe. Sometimes its consecration, sometimes its reception, frequently the body and blood of our Lord which are contained in it, are called the Sacrament; because, as St. Augustine observes, this Sacrament consists of two things, the visible species of the elements, and the invisible flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.[3] We also say that this Sacra-

[1] Aug. Epist. 188, c. 6.

[2] Aug. lib. 3, de Trinit. cap. 4, et 1, 20; contra Faust. cap. 13; Ambr. lib. 1, de sacram. cap. 2; C. Trent, sess. 13, de Euch. c. 5; St. Thomas, 3, p. q. 73, art. 1.

[3] De Catec. erud. lib. 5, c. 16. The sense of St. Augustine is quoted here,

ment is to be adored,[1] meaning, of course, the body and blood of our Lord. But all these, it is obvious, obtain the name of Sacrament in its less strict sense; the species of bread and wine, strictly speaking, constitute the Sacrament.

THE EUCHARIST DIFFERS FROM THE OTHER SACRAMENTS

The great points of difference between this and the other Sacraments are easily understood. The other Sacraments are perfected by the use of their matter, that is, by their administration; Baptism, for instance, becomes a Sacrament when the ablution has been performed. But the Eucharist is constituted a Sacrament by the sole consecration of the elements, and when preserved in a pyx, or deposited in a tabernacle, under either species it ceases not to be a Sacrament. In the material elements of which the other Sacraments are composed, no change takes place. In baptism, for instance, the water, in confirmation the chrism, lose not, in their administration, the nature of water and of oil. But in the Eucharist, that which before consecration was bread and wine, becomes, after consecration, really and substantially the body and blood of our Lord.

THE SACRAMENTAL MATTER COMPOSED OF TWO ELEMENTS, BUT CONSTITUTIVE OF ONE SACRAMENT

But although in the Eucharist the sacramental matter consists of two elements, that is, of bread and wine, yet guided by the authority of the Church, we profess that they are elements, not of two, but of one Sacrament. This is proved by the very number of the Sacraments, which, according to the doctrine of apostolic tradition and the definitions of the Councils of Lateran,[2] Florence,[3] and Trent,[4] is confined to seven. It also follows from the nature of the Holy Eucharist. The grace which it imparts renders us one mystic body; and to accord with what it accom-

not his words; see the book of Lanfranc against Berengarius; also de consecratione, dist. 2.

[1] C. Trent, sess. 15, de Euch. cap. 5, et can. 6.

[2] Of the councils here cited, the general council of the Lateran under Innocent II does not distinctly number the seven Sacraments, but from its canons their number is clearly obtained.

[3] C. of Florence, de sacramentis. [4] C. of Trent, sess. 7, can. 1.

plishes, the Eucharist must constitute but one Sacrament — one, not by consisting of one element, but by signifying one thing. Of this, the analogy which exists between this our spiritual food and the food of the body furnishes an illustration. Meat and drink, although two different things, are used only for one object, the sustenance of the body; so should the two different species of the Sacrament, to signify the food of the soul, be significant of one thing only, and constitute therefore but one Sacrament. The correctness of this analogy is sustained by these words of our Lord: "My flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed." [1]

THE EUCHARIST SIGNIFIES THREE THINGS

What the Sacrament of the Eucharist signifies the pastor will also carefully explain, that on beholding the sacred mysteries the faithful may at the same time feed their souls on the contemplation of heavenly things. This Sacrament, then, is significant of three things: the passion of Christ, a thing past; divine grace, a thing present; and eternal glory, a thing future. It is significant of the passion of Christ: "Do this," says our Lord, "for a commemoration of me." [2] "As often," says the Apostle, "as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he came." [3] It is significant of divine grace, which is infused, on receiving this Sacrament, to nurture and preserve the soul.[4] As by Baptism we are begotten to newness of life, and by Confirmation are strengthened to resist Satan and to profess openly the name of Christ, so by the Sacrament of the Eucharist are we spiritually nurtured and supported. It is also significant of eternal glory, which, according to the divine promises, is reserved for us in our celestial country. These three things, distinguished as they are by different times, — past, present, and future, — the Holy Eucharist, although consisting of different species, marks as significantly as if they were but one.

[1] John vi. 56.
[2] Luke xxii. 19.
[3] 1 Cor. xi. 26.
[4] Tertul. de Resur. carnis, c. 8.

Sermons

The Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar

BY THE REV. P. HEHEL, S.J.

I. *Various Names Given to this Sacrament.* This Sacrament is known by many different names in the writings of the Fathers, who seem to have had recourse to them in order to express its wonderful excellence, one word being insufficient to do so.

(a) The name *Eucharist* is the one most commonly used by early writers, and denotes "good grace," "thanksgiving," "praise." It is a name peculiarly applicable to this Sacrament, for it not only brings before us the thought of everlasting life, —"The grace of God [is] life everlasting" (Rom. vi. 23),— but the Sacrament of the Altar truly contains Christ our Lord, who is Himself grace and the source of all grace. The word "Eucharist" means also "thanksgiving" and "praise," and it is by means of this Holy Sacrament that we daily give thanks to God for all His benefits, and especially for the highest gift of all, bestowed upon us in this mystery. Our Lord Himself offered it in thanksgiving, for the evangelists record that at its institution He took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave thanks.

(b) The Fathers speak of this Sacrament also as the *Sacrifice.* They do this for two reasons: (1) it is a constant commemoration of the sacrifice of the innocent Lamb of God who was slain on the altar of the cross and offered to His Heavenly Father for the salvation of mankind, and (2) it contains everything which according to the Old Law had to be observed in connection with sacrifices. A lamb had to be slain, offered to God, and then consumed by fire. So, too, the Body and Blood of the Lamb of God are offered up, as a sacrifice, by the words of consecration, and finally consumed by the priest.

(c) A third name given to this Sacrament is *Communion.* It unites us with Christ and makes us participate in His Body and His divinity. St. Paul says (1 Cor. x. 16): "The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" It unites us also one with another, so that we may be one in Christ, and incorporated as members of His Body. We

are united in one vast association, and live as brothers and sisters in Him. Whoever desires to come to this Sacrament must lay aside all enmity and ill will, and must love his neighbors as himself. Hence it is also known as the Sacrament of Peace, for none can receive it worthily whose hearts are full of bitterness and wrath.

(d) Another name is *The Lord's Supper;* it is so called because it was instituted by our Lord at the Last Supper which He ate with His disciples before His Passion. It may be called a supper also because we receive His Body and Blood under the forms of bread and wine to nourish our souls that they may enjoy eternal life.

(e) It is also called the Commemoration or *Memorial* of the death of Christ. He offered Himself for the sins of the world and shed His Blood for us, and we ought always to remember His Love. At the Last Supper He said: "This do ye . . . for the commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 25, 26).

(f) When given to the dying, this Sacrament is termed the *Viaticum.* We are all wanderers here on earth, travellers making our way to our heavenly home, and the Body of Christ is our food on our journey, and especially when we are on the point of departure from this world. Every Christian must desire to receive his *viaticum* — his food for the journey — before he dies.

(g) We speak generally of the *Sacrament of the Altar* because it is offered at an altar, and because it fulfils all the three conditions of a Sacrament: viz., it has the outward signs of bread and wine; it was instituted by Christ; and it imparts grace, which is given most abundantly in this Sacrament, for it contains the author of all grace, the Body and Blood which Christ took of the Blessed Virgin His Mother, and which He carried into heaven.

It follows that this Sacrament far surpasses all the rest in value and dignity. In the others God gives grace through things of His own creation, — water, oil, balsam, etc., — but in this Sacrament we receive not merely grace, but the Lord of Grace Himself, the Author and Source of all graces.

In the other Sacraments the outward signs remain unchanged; in Baptism the water continues to be natural water; in Confirmation the oil and balm are not altered, although God has connected His grace with these outward signs in such a way that He gives grace at once, whenever these signs are used in administering the Sacraments. But in the Sacrament of the Altar, after the words of consecration have been uttered, the bread and wine have ceased to be bread and wine, and have been changed into the living Body and most holy Blood of Christ — only in outward appearance do the bread and wine seem unchanged.

In the other Sacraments the things that serve as their matter, the water, oil, and balsam, are created and given by God. But in the Sacrament of the Altar God Himself is present, giving the most wonderful gifts of grace. Christ our Saviour comes so close to us that He allows us really to receive Him. He becomes part of our very selves, unites Himself so intimately with us that we become "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. v. 30).

God is far above the grace that He gives us, and so this Sacrament far surpasses all the rest in value and excellence.

But if this is so, why is it placed third in the list of Sacraments and not first?

Because the natural order of things requires this arrangement. Man is born again in Baptism, he is strengthened in Confirmation, and then he requires food to sustain him in the spiritual life. As the Sacrament of the Altar supplies this food, it occupies the third place, although its great dignity would otherwise make us set it at the head of the list.

II. *Types of this Sacrament.* The whole of the Old Covenant was a figure or type of the New; it all refers to the mysteries to be instituted by Christ under the New Law, and to none is such frequent allusion made as to the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, being the greatest of all. From it, as from their source, flow all graces; about it, as their centre, all converge; in it culminate all the benefits of our redemption by Christ. It is therefore natural that there should be many types of it in the Old Testament. The earliest is the sacrifice of bread and wine offered by Melchisedech, for which reason Christ is called "a

high priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Heb. vi. 20).

Another obvious type was the manna, with which God fed the Israelites for forty years in the desert. The Paschal lamb was also a type; God commanded the Israelites to kill and eat it once each year, with unleavened bread.

Another type was the shewbread or loaves of proposition, offered daily in the name of the twelve tribes of Israel and kept perpetually in the Temple.

There is reference to this Sacrament in the book of Proverbs (ix. 2), where we read that Wisdom "hath slain her victims, mingled her wine, and set forth her table."

By means of these and many other passages in Holy Scripture, God wished to prepare men for the institution of this greatest of all mysteries.

III. *Significance of this Sacrament.* There are two elements in this Sacrament, — bread and wine; the former is changed into the Body of Christ and the latter into His Blood, but although two quite distinct substances are changed, they constitute only one Sacrament, not two. In the natural order, bread and wine, though two different things, serve the same purpose; they both nourish and strengthen our bodies; and in the same way the Body and Blood of Christ, being the spiritual food of our souls, answer the same purpose and form but one Sacrament. For Christ Himself said: "My flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed" (John vi. 56).

In considering this Sacrament we ought to be reminded of three things: one concerns the past, the second belongs to the present, and the third suggests the future. We ought to remember our Lord's Passion, which is already finished, for He said: "This do in commemoration of me." We ought to think of the divine grace that we now receive whenever we approach this Sacrament. And lastly we ought to call to mind the everlasting joy and glory which are, as it were, the fruit of the Sacrament, and which we shall some day enjoy in our heavenly home.

Our participation in this happiness depends upon the manner in which here on earth we receive our Lord's Body, for it is the pledge of everlasting glory.

Why the Sacrament of the Altar was Instituted. I. *To be a Memorial of Christ's Death.* God forbade Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge and said: "In what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death" (Gen. ii. 17). The fruit of this tree was therefore a food that brought death to the soul, and it was by means of another kind of food that Christ purposed to revive, preserve, and strengthen us, and He desired all the members of His Body the Church, all Christians, to share in this food. He said: "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." . . . "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you" (John vi. 52, 54).

He taught us, therefore, that the Sacrament of His Body and Blood was as indispensable to the eternal life of the soul as ordinary food is to the physical life of the body. This food is to be eaten as a memorial of what He did and suffered for us — and of the unfailing love of God. Therefore St. Paul writes, "As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come" (1 Cor. xi. 26). And our Lord Himself said, "This do ye . . . for the commemoration of me" (verse 25). He seems to bid us think of Him and the boundless love He shows us: of His Body, given to the death of the Cross, of His Blood shed for us, of His Life laid down, and of all that He suffered for our sake.

II. *To be a Bond of Union.* When friends are about to part for a long time they often take a farewell meal together, and renew their bond of friendship as they eat and drink. Our Lord did the same, but in a higher and spiritual manner He was truly the friend of men and desired not to leave them without once more gathering them about Him and entertaining them. When He knew that His hour was come when He should die, He called the Apostles and gave Himself to them to be their food. "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15). He longed to be most closely united with men; not only as their Father in their creation, their Brother in His Incarnation, and their Redeemer in His death, but He wished to be and live within them, and so He became our food. What union could possibly be more intimate than this? "He that eateth

my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him" (John vi. 57). St. Cyril in discussing these words says, that we actually are to some extent incorporated into His Body, and become His kinsmen. We receive His Flesh and Blood and participate in His divinity, and thus are so closely united to Him that Christ dwells in us and we in Him.

III. *To be a Sacrifice.* Jesus Christ died on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, but He knew that men would sin again and provoke God's wrath and so need further reconciliation. He arranged therefore that His offering should perpetually be renewed for the good of the whole Church, so that every one might have a true sacrifice with which to make atonement for sin. In this Sacrament He is offered in an unbloody manner, but no less really than on the altar of the cross.

This is evident from His own words, for when at the Last Supper He instituted this holy Sacrament, He took bread in His sacred hands and said: "Take ye, and eat: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you: . . . This chalice is the new testament in my blood: . . . as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 24–26), i.e., as often as you renew the sacrifice that I am about to offer on the cross, you will show forth my death.

All the Fathers and Doctors of the Catholic Church agree in calling the Sacrament at Mass a true unbloody sacrifice, no less precious than the bloody sacrifice which Christ, our high priest for ever, offered for us. The bloody and the unbloody sacrifices are not two, but one, for the latter does not secure fresh merit, but communicates to each one of us the merit won by Christ through His bloody sacrifice on the cross. We are allowed to participate in all the graces and benefits purchased by His death. The council of Trent declared: "If any one asserts that the sacrifice of the Mass is a mere commemoration of the sacrifice of the cross and not a propitiatory sacrifice, — or if he maintains that it benefits those only who receive it, and cannot be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, penalties, and in other necessities, — let him be anathema."

It is therefore the authoritative teaching of the Church that we ought to have recourse to the Holy Eucharist, to thank God for

the favors and benefits that He bestows upon us, and to seek deliverance from dangers and difficulties, for in this holy Sacrament our Lord Himself is present, ready to cure all our defects, ready to give all that we need. He is there, no less ready to pardon us than when He said to the penitent thief: "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Is there anything that God can refuse us when we ask it through this sacrifice, in which His only begotten Son is present and is offered up?

What return can we make for all that He has done? Silver and gold are worthless in His sight, and were we pure as the angels, singing His praises day and night, we could never make Him any thanksgiving comparable to His goodness in instituting this most holy Sacrament.

Yet there is one offering that we can make to God, and it is precious in His sight. We can give Him ourselves, our hearts, our mind, and our will. We can have true faith, firm hope, and loving obedience to His will, and these are what He asks of us in return for all that He has done for the salvation of our souls.

The Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar

BY CARDINAL CORSI

As the time of His Passion approached, Jesus Christ desired to celebrate once more with His apostles the Paschal meal prescribed by the law. Now, as they were at the table, He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to His disciples with the words: "Take ye, and eat. This is my body" (Matth. xxvi. 26). In like manner He took wine, returned thanks, and gave it to them, saying: "Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood" (verses 27, 28). In this manner Jesus instituted the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, this holiest of Sacraments, in which He, in the words of the royal Prophet (Ps. cx. 4), "made a remembrance of his wonderful works."

And as this miracle was to be perpetuated in the Church, Jesus Christ gave to His apostles, and to all their successors, the priests, the authority to do as He had done, until the end of the world, by commanding them: "This do for the commemoration of me" (1 Cor. xi. 24).

I wish to say a few words about the sublimity of the Sacrament of the holy Eucharist, to remind you of the gratitude which we owe to Jesus Christ for this magnificent pledge of His infinite love.

The holy Eucharist is one of the seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church, and, as St. Thomas observes, the sublimest of them all. While in the other Sacraments we receive a share in the graces and merits of the Saviour, we receive in the holy Eucharist Jesus Christ Himself, the author of all graces. As the brook is produced by the spring, so is, in the words of St. Thomas, the holy Eucharist the wellspring of the graces dispensed by the other Sacraments; they are directed towards it as to their final purpose.

The royal Prophet foresaw how God the Father of Mercy, by preparing this heavenly Bread for us, would work the greatest of all His miracles (Ps. cx. 4). Our holy faith teaches us that by uttering the words of consecration the priest changes the substance of the bread immediately into the Body of Christ, and the substance of the wine into His Blood. Of the bread and wine only the forms remain — the exterior appearances. Thus the only begotten Son of God, born of Mary the Virgin, is present really and substantially in the most holy Sacrament under both forms. Hence there is due to Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist the same adoration that the angels and saints offer to Him in heaven — the adoration which all creatures owe to their God and Creator.

St. Ambrose remarks: "If the creation of the universe cost the almighty God only a word, only an act of the will, how can it be difficult for the same omnipotent word to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Saviour, who, by virtue of His omnipresence, as enthroned gloriously in heaven, and at the same time present in the Sacrament of the altar (Lib. 4, de Sacr. c. 4).

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, reminds that the eternal Father, by sending into the world His only begotten Son for the redemption of mankind, gave us in Him all the boundless riches of His heavenly treasures (Rom. viii. 32). When, therefore, Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist gives Himself wholly to us, with His divinity and humanity, assuredly He can

give us no more. Therefore the Angelical Teacher calls it justly the greatest of all miracles. Here shine in brightest radiance Divine omnipotence, mercy, wisdom, generosity, and, above all, God's infinite love. St. Augustine calls this divine Sacrament the sacred bond of love, for he who receives it with befitting preparation becomes united with Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ with him. The Lord said: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him" (John vi. 57).

Our loving Saviour not only dwells among us until the end of the world, as He promised, but He is the compassionate Physician who heals our wounds, the Teacher who enlightens our understanding and strengthens it in the faith, the loving Shepherd, He who not only invites His faithful to His Table, but feeds them with His own Flesh and gives them to drink of His own Blood, so that they may be united most intimately with Him. How great, therefore, should be our appreciation for this infinite love! Oh, when we approach the holy Table, the very thought of the fact that Jesus Christ is present upon the altar should fill us with love, should incite us to offer up to our gracious Saviour our hearts, our inclinations, our wills; we should lament with David that we are so poor, and so little able to make return to Him for the magnitude of the gifts that He bestows upon us (Ps. cxv. 12).

And yet there are among Christians those whose faith is not strong, who are sadly indifferent to this miracle of divine love. Many allow month after month to pass without once approaching the eucharist banquet. They keep distant from the heavenly Physician, the divine Teacher, the good Shepherd. Jesus Christ tarries upon our altars, ready day and night to listen to our petitions; and daily the priests offer up upon the altars this sacrifice of expiation for the sins of mankind. But while the market-places are filled with people, and the meeting-places with gossipers and idlers, our churches are often deserted. Even many Christians give not a thought to Jesus, who longs for them to lavish upon them His gifts, of which they stand so greatly in need. And when exposed for public adoration, the blessed Sacrament often meets with indifference, irreverence, even contempt.

What greater insult, what baser ingratitude, could there be,

dear brethren! Oh, if only the eyes of men's understanding were opened to make them realize in the blessed Sacrament the glorious miracle of Divine omnipotence, the source of all graces, the triumph of love, the pledge of salvation, God Himself, clothed in our flesh! Oh, let us unite ourselves with the angels of heaven in the praise and adoration of the Lord. Let us approach Him with pure hearts, with living faith, with burning love, to receive Him under the veil of the eucharistic forms as our own spiritual Food; let us live intimately united to Him, never to be separated from Him. Then we may hope to behold in heaven face to face His inexpressible beauty, and taste of that blessed fruit which He has promised to those who receive Him worthily at His own Table (John vi. 52). Amen.

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SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

SUBJECT

THE EFFECTS OF HOLY COMMUNION

TEXT

Lord, it is good for us to be here. — MATT. xvii. 4.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. The transfiguration of our Lord took place on Mt. Thabor in Galilee but a short time before His passion. The Saviour foresaw the severe trials to which His disciples

would shortly be subjected in witnessing His bitter sufferings and death, as well as the more distant crosses which, when He had finally departed from them, would be theirs on their journey through life. He was moved, therefore, with compassion for them and their weakness, and to strengthen them for their burdens ahead and give them a foretaste of the eternal rewards in store for them hereafter He took apart those most devoted to Him, and unfolded to their eyes a passing glimpse of His glorified Humanity.

Effects similar to those which the three Apostles experienced on Mt. Thabor are wrought in the souls of those who partake worthily of Holy Communion, — they are fortified against the assaults of passion, they are powerfully assisted in bearing the crosses of life, and they receive here below a foretaste of heavenly joy and bliss. Truly, each time the worthy communicant kneels at the holy table he can say with Peter, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

I. The greatness of the effects of Holy Communion. 1. The Eucharist is the living fountain of graces, whereas the other Sacraments are as so many streams conveying graces to our souls; the latter contain grace, the former contains the Author of grace. 2. The grace of the Eucharist is superior to that of the other Sacraments; these others are but a preparation for, and are ordained to, Holy Communion; Baptism and Penance remove sin, Confirmation and Extreme Unction strengthen the soul against external assaults or spiritual debility, Holy Orders and Matrimony dispose a man for the proper fulfilment of certain special duties. Thus the grace of each of the other Sacraments is a preparation for the crowning grace of the Eucharist.

II. The grace produced by Holy Communion. 1. The grace of this Sacrament is that of spiritual nourishment, by which the soul is transformed into the likeness of Christ. 2. The results of this grace are similar to those which ordinary food produces in the body, — (a) it repairs; (b) it strengthens; (c) it

delights; (d) it sustains. 3. The Eucharist by remitting venial sins **repairs** the losses which the soul suffers through these sins; it **strengthens** the soul by uniting man through charity more closely with God and his neighbor; it **delights** the soul by exciting actual devotion and fervor; it **sustains** the soul by fortifying it against temptation, by repressing concupiscence and passion, and by facilitating the attainment of eternal life.

III. **Conditions requisite for the grace of Holy Communion.** 1. As natural food is not of use to one who is physically dead, so neither does Holy Communion produce spiritual nourishment in a soul that is spiritually dead. Those who receive Communion unworthily do not receive benefit, but on the contrary eat and drink judgment to themselves (1 Cor. xi. 29). 2. Those who approach this Sacrament worthily receive the graces explained above. Frequent Communion is profitable when received in the state of grace and with the intention of pleasing God (Pius X). 3. Spiritual Communion, which consists in an ardent desire of sacramental Communion, confers a considerable fruit of the Holy Eucharist, although it is inferior to sacramental Communion.

Conclusion. Let us never omit a diligent preparation for Holy Communion, and a fervent thanksgiving after it.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part II

THE SALUTARY EFFECTS OF THE EUCHARIST

The salutary effects of this Sacrament, since they should be known by all, the pastor will expound to all, indiscriminately and without reserve.[1] What we have said at such length on this subject is to be made known to the faithful, principally with a view to make them sensible of the advantages which flow from its participation, — advantages too numerous and important to be expressed in words, and among which the pastor must be content to select one or two points for explanation, to show the

[1] C. Trent, sess. 13, c. 3, et can. 5; Iren. lib. 4, c. 14; Cyril. lib. 4, in Joan. cc. 11, 14; Chrysost, hom. 45, in Joan.; St. Thomas, 3, p. q. 79.

superabundant graces with which the holy mysteries abound. To this end it will be found conducive to premise an explanation of the nature and efficacy of the other Sacraments, and then compare the Eucharist to the living fountain, the other Sacraments to so many rivulets. With great truth is the Holy Eucharist called the fountain of all grace, containing as it does, after an admirable manner, the source of all gifts and graces, the author of all the Sacraments, Christ our Lord, from whom as from their source they derive all their goodness and perfection. This comparison, therefore, serves to show how great are the treasures of grace which are derived from this Sacrament.

It will also be found expedient to consider attentively the nature of bread and wine, the symbols of this Sacrament. What bread and wine are to the body, the Eucharist is, in a superior order, to the health and joy of the soul. It is not, like bread and wine, changed into our substance; but in some measure changes us into its own nature, and to it we may apply these words of St. Augustine: "I am the food of the grown; grow and thou shalt partake of this food; nor shalt thou change me into thee, as thou dost thy corporal food, but thou shalt be changed into me."[1]

IT IMPARTS GRACE

If then grace and truth come by Jesus Christ,[2] these spiritual treasures must be poured into that soul which receives with purity and holiness Him who says of Himself: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him."[3] Those who piously and religiously receive this Sacrament, receive no doubt the Son of God into their souls, and are united as living members to His body; for it is written, "He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me";[4] and also, "The bread that I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world."[5] Explaining these words of the Saviour, St. Cyril says: "The Eternal Word, uniting himself to his own flesh, imparted to it a vivifying power; it became him, therefore, to unite himself to us after a wonderful manner, through his sacred flesh and precious blood, which

[1] Lib. 7, Conf. c. 10. See Ambr. lib. 5, de sacr. c. 4, and Chrys. hom. 45, in Joan. [2] John i. 17. [3] John vi. 57.
[4] John vi. 58. [5] John vi. 52.

we receive in the bread and wine, consecrated by his vivifying benediction." [1]

TO COMMUNICATE WORTHILY WE MUST BE IN THE STATE OF GRACE

But when it is said that the Eucharist imparts grace, this does not mean that to receive this Sacrament with advantage it is unnecessary to be previously in the state of grace. Natural food can be of no use to a person who is already dead, and in like manner the sacred mysteries can avail him nothing who lives not in the Spirit. Hence this Sacrament has been instituted under the forms of bread and wine, to signify that the object of its institution is not to recall to life a dead soul, but to preserve life to a living one. We say that this Sacrament imparts grace, because even the *first* grace, which all should have before they presume to approach this Sacrament, lest they eat and drink judgment to themselves,[2] is given to none unless they desire to receive the Holy Eucharist, which is the end of all the Sacraments, the symbol of that ecclesiastical unity, without which no one can receive divine grace.

Again, as the body is not only supported but increased by natural food, from which we derive new pleasure every day, so also the life of the soul is not only sustained but invigorated by feasting on the Eucharistic banquet, which imparts to it an increasing zest for heavenly things. With strictest truth and propriety, therefore, do we say that this Sacrament, which may be well compared to manna, "having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste," imparts grace to the soul.[3]

THE EUCHARIST REMITS VENIAL SINS

That the Holy Eucharist remits lighter offences, or, as they are commonly called, venial sins, cannot be doubted. Whatever losses the soul sustains by falling into some slight offences through the violence of passion, these the Eucharist, which cancels lesser sins, repairs in the same manner (not to depart from the illustration already adduced that natural food, as we know

[1] Lib. 4, in Joan., cc. 12, 14, and ep. 10, ad Nestor.
[2] 1 Cor. xi. 29. [3] Wisd. xvi. 20.

from experience, gradually repairs the daily waste caused by the vital heat of the system. Of this heavenly Sacrament justly, therefore, has St. Ambrose said, "This daily bread is taken as a remedy for daily infirmity,"[1] which, however, is to be understood of venial imperfections only.

IT IS AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST THE CONTAGION OF SINS

The Holy Eucharist is also an antidote against the contagion of sin, and a shield against the violent assaults of temptation.[2] It is, as it were, a heavenly medicine, which secures the soul against the easy approach of virulent and deadly infection. St. Cyprian records that when in the early ages of the Church Christians were hurried in multitudes by tyrants to torments and death because they professed the name of Christ, they received from the hand of the Bishop the Sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, lest, perhaps overcome by excess of torments, they should yield in the conflict.[3]

IT REPRESSES CONCUPISCENCE

It also represses the licentious desires of the flesh, and keeps them in due subjection to the spirit. In proportion as it inflames the soul with the fire of charity, in the same proportion does it necessarily extinguish the fire of concupiscence.

IT FACILITATES THE ATTAINMENT OF ETERNAL LIFE

Finally, to narrow within the compass of a few words all the advantages and blessings which emanate from this Sacrament, the Holy Eucharist facilitates to an extraordinary degree the attainment of eternal life: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood," says the Redeemer, "hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day."[4] The grace which it imparts, brings peace and tranquillity to the soul; and when the

[1] Lib. 4, de Sacram. c. 6, et lib. 5, c. 4; Innocent III. lib. 4, de myst. Miss. c. 44; Cyril. lib. 4, in Joan. c. 17, and lib. 3, c. 36. Among the writings of St. Bernard there is a notable one which begins: Panem Angelorum. See also St. Thomas, III, q. 79.

[2] Aug. tract. 26, in Joan. [3] Lib. 1, Epist. 2, ad Cornel.

[4] John vi. 55; vii. Chrys. de sacerdotio dial. 6; St. Thomas, 3, p. q. 79, art. 2.

hour arrives in which he is to take his departure from this mortal life, like another Elias, who in the strength of his miraculous repast walked to Horeb the mount of God,[1] the Christian, invigorated by the strengthening influence of this heavenly food, shall wing his way to the mansions of everlasting glory and never-ending bliss.

THESE EFFECTS EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED

All these important particulars the pastor will be able fully to expound to the faithful if he but dilate on the sixth chapter of St. John, in which are developed the manifold effects of this Sacrament; or if, glancing through the life and actions of our Lord, he shows that if they who received Him beneath their roof during His mortal life,[2] or were restored to health by touching His vesture, or even the hem of His garment,[3] were justly deemed happy, how much more happy we, into whose souls, resplendent as He is with unfading glory, He disdains not to enter, to heal all our spiritual wounds, to enrich us with His choicest gifts, and to unite us to Himself!

THE MANNER OF COMMUNICATING IS THREEFOLD

But to excite the faithful to emulate better gifts,[4] the pastor will also point out who they are who derive these inestimable blessings from a participation of the holy mysteries, reminding them that Christians may communicate differently and with different effects. Hence our predecessors in the faith, as we read in the Council of Trent,[5] distinguished three classes of communicants: Some receive the Sacrament only; such are those sinners who dread not to approach the holy mysteries with polluted lips and depraved hearts, who, as the Apostle says, eat and drink unworthily.[6] Of this class of communicants St. Augustine says: "He who dwells not in Christ, and in whom Christ does not dwell, most certainly eats not spiritually his flesh, although carnally and visibly he press with his teeth the Sacrament of his flesh and blood."[7] Not only, therefore, do

[1] 3 Kings xix. 8.
[2] Luke xix. 9.
[3] Matt. xiv. 36 and ix. 20.
[4] 1 Cor. xii. 31.
[5] De consecr. dist. 2, can. 46, sess. 13, cap. 8.
[6] 1 Cor. xi. 29.
[7] In Joan. tract. 16, and contra Donat. lib. 5, c. 8.

those who receive the Holy Eucharist with these dispositions obtain no fruit from its participation, but, as the Apostle says, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.[1] Others are said to receive the Holy Eucharist in spirit only. They are those who, inflamed with a lively "faith that worketh by charity,"[2] participate in desire of this celestial food, from which they receive, if not the entire, at least very considerable fruit. Lastly, there are some who receive the Holy Eucharist both spiritually and sacramentally, those who, according to the advice of the Apostle, having first proved themselves,[3] approach this divine banquet, adorned with the nuptial garment,[4] and derive from it all those superabundant graces which we have already mentioned. Those, therefore, who, having it in their power to receive with due preparation the Sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord, are yet satisfied with a spiritual communion only, manifestly deprive themselves of a heavenly treasure of inestimable value.

Sermons

The Effects of Holy Communion

BY THE REV. P. HEHEL, S.J.

I. In Holy Communion we receive all that God contains in Himself, for we really and truly receive God.

If the presence of Christ on earth was enough to cure many diseases and work many miracles, what can He not effect in a soul with which He is so closely united?

If the ark of the covenant containing the rod of Moses, the tables of the law, and some manna, brought a blessing upon the houses of David and of Obededom, how much greater must be the effect upon a soul of this most holy Sacrament, in which God's almighty power, His goodness, His mercy, and all the other treasures of heaven, are conceded!

If wonderful graces are given us through the relics of the saints; if, for instance, the bones of the prophet Eliseus were allowed to be the means of raising a dead man to life; if through the touch of relics the deaf receive their hearing, the blind their

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 29.
[2] Gal. v. 6.
[3] 1 Cor. xi. 28.
[4] Matt. xxii. 11.

sight, and the sick recover their health,—what a marvellous effect must the living body of our Lord Jesus Christ have upon a soul!

Many roots and herbs possess medicinal properties and are prescribed as remedies for various diseases; what a wonderful remedy we have in this Sacrament when we receive the Giver of all means of cure!

We pay great reverence to the Cross and to the thorns, nails, lance, and all the instruments of our Lord's Passion; surely we cannot sufficiently reverence our Lord Himself when He comes to us in the Sacrament of His Love!

II. In this Sacrament we receive all the gifts and graces that we need. In it the impatient and quarrelsome find patience and love; the ignorant may derive knowledge from the source of all wisdom; in short, the faithful receive in Holy Communion all the virtues that they require.

Moreover, we are by it made holy in body and soul, for we come into contact with God, who is all-holy. St. Cyril says of Moses that he went up Mount Sinai a man, but he came down filled with the Godhead, and the same is true of us when we have received our Lord's Body. We are but human beings as we approach the altar, but we bring God away with us, we are even in a certain sense sharers in His Divinity; for what we receive in Holy Communion is "the Flesh of God, and it has power to deify."

As soon as we receive our Lord, He begins to quicken us to new life; He is the soul of our soul, the life of our life, and we can truly say with St. Paul, "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). He thinks, speaks, acts, loves, and suffers within me. This is why St. Augustine imagines Him uttering these beautiful words: "I am the food of the strong. Grow, and ye shall receive me; ye shall not change me into yourselves, as is done in the case of bodily food, but I will transform you into myself."

Would that every Christian remembered this wonderful truth! Our Lord Himself taught us that it was not fitting to cast the bread intended for God's children to the dogs, nor to throw pearls before swine. How can it be right for one who has received

Holy Communion, and has been, so to say, deified by it, to give his body up to impurity?

We derive from this Sacrament strength to resist all temptations. Experience forces us to acknowledge our weakness and frailty, for a good resolution is often broken almost as soon as it is made; scarcely have we risen again after a fall, than we stumble afresh. We seem to avoid one temptation only to run into another, and no one can deny that the spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak.

We have no excuse, however, if, knowing our weakness, we do not have recourse to the Sacrament which is the food of the strong. St. Jerome says that nothing has so much power as the Bread of Life to strengthen men to resist the temptations of the devil, the evil examples, and the luxury and vanity of the world.

King David, speaking prophetically of this Sacrament, exclaims (Ps. xxii. 5): "Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me." St. Cyprian has recorded that Holy Communion was given to the martyrs on their way to execution, because their steadfastness would be tried in every possible way before their death. St. John Chrysostom says that the Christians were made so strong by Holy Communion that they returned from the altar with the courage of lions. How is it possible for us to fear anything when God is truly with us? What harm can the world and the flesh do us when we carry the mighty God within our hearts? As long as we have recourse to this holy Sacrament and receive it worthily, we are invincible; but if we receive it unworthily, that alone is enough to cause our defeat and ruin.

In the book of Proverbs (xxiii. 1, 2), Solomon thus addresses a man invited to eat with a prince: "Consider diligently what is set before thy face: and put a knife to thy throat." The learned Cornelius à Lapide, in commenting upon this passage, remarks that the knife is meant to signify discrimination and faith, enabling us to distinguish the Bread of Life from ordinary food.

Take therefore this knife of discrimination and faith and cut away all unworthy motives for approaching the Sacrament, all human respect, vanity, spurious devotion and hypocrisy, all de-

sire to please others and to seem pious, and go to Holy Communion with the pure intention of receiving God and being united with Him.

Cut away also all feelings of anger and enmity, and be reconciled to thy neighbor before coming to Holy Communion. Put aside all unbecoming and inordinate affections, all vain thoughts, and especially all doubts which the devil may suggest. Leave all anxiety and trouble behind, and with firm purpose and mind enlightened by faith go forward to adore God in His majesty.

Be careful also to avoid causing distraction and inconvenience to others either by frivolous behavior or by long prayers and excessive outward devotion; faith and good sense should regulate all our manner of receiving Holy Communion, and we should edify others rather than annoy them. If frequent Communion seems to make us worse and not better, the fault must be ours, and we must approach the Sacrament unworthily,—for the "food of the strong" cannot fail to impart strength to those who receive it well.

The Effects of Holy Communion

BY CARDINAL CORSI

As the Most Holy Eucharist surpasses all other Sacraments in excellence and dignity, so it also surpasses them in power and efficacy. The growth of grace effected through other Sacraments of the living is in the Holy Eucharist all the greater as the nature of this Sacrament is more exalted. The other Sacraments are channels which bring to us the saving waters of grace: this one, however, brings the very source of grace, and while the others operate through the strength which comes through Jesus Christ, in this one Jesus Christ Himself, in His own Person, pours out upon us the effects of His grace, nourishes us with His Presence, lives and dwells in us with all the treasures of His grace. Of such magnitude is the growth of grace which this Sacrament effects in those who worthily communicate, that we may call it the abundance and fulness of graces: the grace of enlightenment for the understanding of charity for the heart, strength for the will, fortitude, sweetness, and delight for the spirit.

But the characteristic and very special effect of this Sacrament is that it feeds our souls. Jesus Christ willed to institute this Sacrament under the forms of bread and wine, in order to show us that He is the supernatural food of our souls.

The first effect of food, one upon which all other effects depend, is to unite itself most intimately with us. It not only enters the body, it becomes part of it, of the flesh, nerves, and bones. So, too, Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist unites Himself substantially and intimately with us, that we, as it were, form with Him only one body and one soul. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him" (John vi. 57). And as material food preserves the life of the body, which could not exist without it, gives it strength and promotes its growth, so the holy Eucharist supports the life of our soul, which is sanctifying grace; it gives it power and strength and elevates it to a higher degree of perfection and sanctity.

The holy Eucharist is our remedy for the weakness of the soul, — temptations which assail us, passions which cause us perpetual warfare, lapses into venial sin to which we are daily exposed; all things that enfeeble our soul, and if not checked would lead to the death of mortal sin. The holy Eucharist helps in a marvellous way to overcome temptations, and affords us mighty weapons against Satan and his suggestions.

As regards our passions, that other source of our weakness, it is certain that if the holy Eucharist does not wholly deliver us from them, it at least alleviates their violence and subdues them. Hence St. Bernard said to the faithful: "If some of you no longer experience the violent emotions of anger, of envy, of intemperance, ascribe it to the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ which you have received in holy Communion." For the sensual passion in particular, which is by far the most violent and most dangerous of our enemies, this Sacrament is a powerful bridle. For it is specially ordained to heal the mortal wounds inflicted by the evils of concupiscence, and to moderate its fire. The immaculate Flesh of Christ imparts its purity to ours; His pure Blood purifies our blood which has been corrupted by sin.

Finally, the holy Eucharist purifies us from our daily faults, whereby are not understood grievous sins, which, as a rule, are

only wiped out through the Sacrament of Penance, but those lesser faults into which we fall daily. The Council of Trent assures us that the holy Eucharist has the power to efface the same. So, therefore, the holy Eucharist preserves in us the spiritual life by removing or suppressing everything that tends to destroy it.

Furthermore, corporal food not only preserves the life of the body, but fortifies, strengthens, and develops it, so the Eucharistic Bread not only preserves the soul from death, but causes it to acquire virtue upon virtue and to increase in holiness. Hence, in holy Scripture it is prefigured in that mysterious bread which the Angel presented to Elias in the wilderness. This bread gave to the Prophet such extraordinary power that he, without partaking of any other food, journeyed for forty days and forty nights unto the summit of Mount Horeb. What an impressive picture of the strength with which the holy Eucharist inspires us to walk upon the path of the Lord, and upon the difficult road of our pilgrimage, unto the Kingdom of Heaven.

The power of this Divine Food is so great that it uplifts us above ourselves and makes of us spiritual and heavenly beings. Jesus Christ desired to let us participate in this Sacrament, in His Flesh and Blood, in His Divinity, so as to grant us participation in His Divine Spirit, and through this Sacramental union to lead us to a perfect union with Himself. He desired to transform us completely into Himself, not by changing our nature into His, but by transforming our spirit into His. This is the great and principal effect of the holy Eucharist: it clothes, penetrates, and fills us with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, with His humility, His meekness, His charity, and all His virtues. Hence, those who worthily communicate may exclaim with the Apostle: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." For the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which He imparts to us in the most holy Sacrament, becomes the source and the soul of all our thoughts, our inclinations, and actions. What more can be said to illustrate the power and efficay of this Divine Sacrament?

Dear brethren, if you approach the Lord's Supper merely from habit or because it is the custom, with little devotion and lukewarm preparation, with a heart filled with worldly, even sinful

inclinations, small wonder if you feel no spark of that saving power which the holy Eucharist bestows. The salutary effects of food stand in relation to the more or less regular use we make of it. A food may be ever so nourishing and strengthening, yet this strength must be renewed. And as Christ is the food and nourishment of the soul, why do you remain away from Him for months at a time? Why do some, indeed, receive Him only once a year? Food partaken of so seldom cannot produce lasting results.

Let us, therefore, approach not only well prepared, but frequently, the holy Table. Let us put aside lukewarmness and indifference. Then we shall learn to know from actual experience the salutary and precious effects of the holy Eucharist, which will be produced in us to the sanctification of our souls. Amen.

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THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

SUBJECT

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

TEXT

Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness. — EPH. v. 2.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians from his prison in Rome, exhorts them, after the example of Christ, to walk in love and practise mutual charity. Christ, he reminds

them, has so loved them as to become their sacrifice, offering Himself for them on the cross. That same sacrifice of love is perpetually continued in the Mass.

I. The Mass is a sacrifice. 1. A sacrifice is the offering of a gift by a priest to God alone in acknowledgment of His supreme sovereignty. Sacrifice belongs to the true religion, because it is the external and ritualistic expression of God's supreme dominion over all creation, and of man's surrender of himself to his Creator. 2. Sacrifice is a form of worship practised by all peoples in all ages. It was revealed by God to our first parents and handed down by tradition, as we learn from the sacrifices offered by Cain and Abel, the Patriarchs, Melchisedech, etc. 3. Various forms of sacrifice were revealed by God to Moses: (a) the holocaust, in token of God's supreme dominion; (b) the peace-offering, intended for thanksgiving; (c) the sin-offering, to atone for offences against God or the neighbor. 4. All these ancient sacrifices were figures and types of the Sacrifice of the Mass foretold by the prophet Malachy (Mal. i. 11). 5. At the Last Supper our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist as a sacrament for our sanctification and as a sacrifice whereby to worship God.

II. The excellence of the sacrifice of the Mass. 1. The Mass is the same as the sacrifice of the cross, since the victim and the principal offerer are the same, namely, Christ Himself. 2. The Mass is offered for four ends: (a) to give honor and glory to God; (b) to thank God for His benefits; (c) to obtain remission of sins and of temporal punishments due to sin; (d) to obtain from God blessings spiritual and temporal. 3. The Mass profits not only the celebrant and the communicants, but all the faithful, living and dead. It is of special benefit to those for whom it is applied by the priest. The stipend offered is not pay for the Mass, which is of infinite value, but a slight contribution toward the temporal support of the priest.

Conclusion. 1. Esteem and reverence is due to this august sacrifice. 2. Never miss Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. 3. Hear Mass as frequently as possible, even on week-days. 4. Al-

ways assist at Mass with devotion: (a) Stand in spirit on Calvary; (b) use a prayer-book or say the beads; (c) intend to derive some particular benefit from the Mass you hear.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part II

The Eucharist is a Sacrifice

We now come to explain the nature of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, that pastors may know what are the principal instructions to be communicated to the faithful regarding this mystery, on Sundays and holy days, in compliance with the decree of the Council of Trent.[1] Not only is this Sacrament a treasure of heavenly riches, which if we turn to good account will purchase for us the favor and friendship of heaven, but it also possesses the peculiar and extraordinary value of enabling us to make some suitable return to God for the inestimable benefits bestowed on us by His bounty. If duly and legitimately offered, this victim is most grateful and most acceptable to God. Of the sacrifices of the old law it is written: "Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldest not";[2] and also, "If thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would indeed have given it: with burnt offerings thou wilt not be delighted."[3] Yet so acceptable in His sight were those sacrifices that, as the Scripture testifies, from them He "smelled a sweet savor,"[4] that is to say, they were grateful and acceptable to Him. What, then, have we not to hope from the efficacy of a sacrifice in which is immolated and offered no less a victim than He of whom a voice from heaven twice proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!"[5] This mystery, therefore, the pastor will carefully explain to the people, that when assembled at its celebration, they may learn to make it the subject of attentive and devout meditation.

INSTITUTED FOR TWO GREAT ENDS

He will teach, in the first place, that the Eucharist was instituted by our Lord for two great purposes, — to be the celestial food of the soul, preserving and supporting spiritual life, and to

[1] Sess. 22, princip. c. 8.
[2] Heb. x. 5.
[3] Ps. l. 18.
[4] Gen. viii. 21.
[5] Matt. iii. 17.

give to the Church a perpetual sacrifice, by which sin may be expiated, and our heavenly Father, whom our crimes have often grievously offended, may be turned from wrath to mercy, from the severity of just vengeance to the exercise of benignant clemency. Of this the paschal lamb, which was offered and eaten by the Israelites as a sacrament and sacrifice, was a lively figure.[1] Nor could our divine Lord, when about to offer himself to his eternal Father on the altar of the cross, have given a more illustrious proof of his unbounded love for us than by bequeathing to us a visible sacrifice, by which the bloody sacrifice, which a little after was to be offered once on the cross, was to be renewed, and its memory celebrated daily throughout the universal Church even to the consummation of time, to the great advantage of her children.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRAMENT AND A SACRIFICE IS TWOFOLD

The difference between the Eucharist as a sacrament and a sacrifice is very great; it is twofold: as a sacrament it is perfected by consecration; as a sacrifice all its efficacy consists in its oblation. When deposited in a tabernacle or borne to the sick it is, therefore, a sacrament, not a sacrifice. As a sacrament it is also to the worthy receiver a source of merit, and brings with it all those advantages which we have already mentioned; as a sacrifice it is not only a source of merit, but also of satisfaction. As in His passion our Lord merited and satisfied for us, so in the oblation of this sacrifice, which is a bond of Christian unity, Christians merit the fruit of His passion and satisfy for sin.

THIS SACRIFICE WHEN AND BY WHOM INSTITUTED

With regard to the institution of this sacrifice the Council of Trent has removed all doubt by declaring that it was instituted by our Lord at His last supper, while it denounces anathema against all who assert that in it is not offered to God a true and proper sacrifice, or that *to offer* means nothing more than that Christ gives Himself to be our spiritual

[1] Deut. xvi. 1 ff.

food.[1] That sacrifice is due to God alone, the holy Council also states in the clearest terms.[2] The solemn sacrifice of the Mass is, it is true, sometimes offered to honor the memory of the Saints; but it is never offered to them, but to Him alone who has crowned them with unfading glory. Never does the officiating minister say: "I offer sacrifice to thee, Peter, or to thee, Paul"; but while he offers sacrifice to God alone, he renders Him thanks for the signal victories won by the martyrs and implores their patronage, "that they whose memory we celebrate on earth, may vouchsafe to intercede for us in heaven."[3] The doctrine of the Catholic Church with regard to this sacrifice she received from our Lord when at His last supper, committing to his Apostles the sacred mysteries, He said: "Do this for a commemoration of me."[4] He then, as the holy Synod has defined, ordained them priests, and commanded them and their successors in the ministry to immolate and offer in sacrifice his precious body and blood.[5] Of this the words of the Apostle to the Corinthians also afford sufficient evidence. "You cannot," says he, "drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils: you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils."[6] As, then, by the "table of devils" we understand the altar upon which sacrifice was offered to them, so by "the table of the Lord," to bring the words of the Apostle to an apposite conclusion, should be understood the altar on which sacrifice was offered to the Lord.

FIGURES AND PROPHECIES OF THIS SACRIFICE

Should we look for figures and prophecies of this sacrifice in the Old Testament, we find, in the first place, that its institution was clearly foretold by Malachy in these words: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: for my name is

[1] See C. Trent, de Sacrif. Missae, c. 1, 3; Dionys. lib. 17, de Eccles. c. 3; Ignat. epist. ad Smyrn.; Tert. lib. de Orat.; Iren. lib 4, c. 32; Aug. lib. 10, de Civit. Dei, c. 10; lib. 17, c. 20; lib. 18, c. 35; lib. 10, c. 13; lib. 22, c. 8, and in various other places. See also C. Trent, Sess. 22, de sacrific. Missae, c. 1, can. 1 and 2.

[2] C. of Trent, sess. 21, c. 3.

[3] Aug. contra Faust. lib. 20, c. 21.

[4] Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24.

[5] C. of Trent, sess. 22, c. 1.

[6] 1 Cor. x. 21.

great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts."[1] This saving victim was also foretold, as well before as after the promulgation of the Mosaic law, by a variety of sacrifices; for this alone, as the perfection and completion of all, comprises all the advantages which were typified by the other sacrifices. In none of the sacrifices of the Old Law, however, do we discover a more lively image of the Eucharistic sacrifice than in that of Melchisedech.[2] Our Lord Himself, at His Last Supper, offered to His Eternal Father His precious body and blood under the appearances of bread and wine, at the same time declaring Himself "a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech."[3]

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS THE SAME AS THAT OF THE CROSS

We therefore confess that the sacrifice of the Mass is one and the same sacrifice as that of the cross. The victim is one and the same, Christ Jesus, who offered Himself, once only, a bloody sacrifice on the altar of the cross. The bloody and unbloody victim is still one and the same, and the oblation of the cross is daily renewed in the eucharistic sacrifice, in obedience to the command of our Lord: "Do this for a commemoration of me."[4] The priest is also the same, Christ our Lord. The ministers who offer this sacrifice, consecrate the holy mysteries not in their own but in the person of Christ. This the words of consecration declare. The priest does not say, "This is the body of Christ," but, "This is my body"; and thus invested with the character of Christ, he changes the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of his real body and blood.[5]

THE MASS IS A SACRIFICE OF PRAISE, THANKSGIVING, AND PROPITIATION

That the holy sacrifice of the Mass, therefore, is not only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, or a commemoration of the sacrifice of the cross, but also a sacrifice of propitiation, by which God is appeased and rendered propitious, the pastor will teach as a dogma defined by the unerring authority of a general Coun-

[1] Malach. i. 11. [2] Gen. xiv. 18. [3] Heb. vii. 17; Ps. cix. 4.
[4] Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24.
[5] Chrys. hom. 2; in 2, ad Timoth.; hom. de prod. Judae; Ambr. lib. 4, de Sacram. c. 4.

cil of the Church.[1] If, therefore, with pure hearts and a lively faith, and with a sincere sorrow for past transgressions, we immolate and offer in sacrifice this most holy victim, we shall, no doubt, receive from the Lord "mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid."[2] So acceptable to God is the sweet odor of this sacrifice that through its oblation He pardons our sins, bestowing on us the gifts of grace and of repentance. Hence the Church solemnly prays: "As often as the commemoration of this victim is celebrated, so often is the work of our salvation promoted, and the plenteous fruits of that bloody victim flow in upon us abundantly, through this unbloody sacrifice."[3]

THE MASS IS BENEFICIAL TO THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

The pastor will also teach that such is the efficacy of this sacrifice that its benefits extend not only to the celebrant and the communicant, but also to all the faithful, whether living, or numbered among those who have died in the Lord but whose sins have not yet been fully expiated. According to apostolic tradition the most authentic, it is not less available when offered for these departed than when offered for the living in atonement for sins, in alleviation of punishments, satisfactions, calamities, or for the relief of necessities.[4] It is hence easy to perceive that the Mass, whenever and wherever offered, because conducive to the common interests and salvation of all, is to be considered common to all the faithful.

Sermon

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

BY THE RT. REV. ALEXANDER MACDONALD, D.D.

Altar, priest, sacrifice, — these three go together. There is no altar but for the offering of sacrifice, no lawful sacrifice without a priest called of God as Aaron was. Hence, where sacrifice is abolished the priesthood is done away with, altars are pulled down, and prayer becomes the highest form of religious wor-

[1] C. of Trent, sess. 22, de sacrif. Missae, c. 2, can. 3. [2] Heb. iv. 16.
[3] Secret Prayer for Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.
[4] C. of Trent, sess. 22, cap. 206.

ship. And because the highest form of worship can be offered to God alone, where sacrifice is no longer offered, no voice is raised in prayer to the saints that reign with Christ. The human mind is logical even when entangled in the mazes of error; for error follows from the logical working out of false principles, as truth does from the logical working out of true ones. Is prayer, then, the highest form of Christian worship? Is the Christian religion without a sacrifice? Let the words of the text supply the answer: "We have an altar, whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle." Christians have an altar, as the Jews had theirs; therefore Christians have a sacrifice, as the Jews had theirs. This sacrifice is the Holy Mass.

The blessed Eucharist is at once a Sacrament and a sacrifice — the one great sacrifice of the New Law. As a Sacrament, it is in one sense an abiding thing, a presence on our altars that is with us always; as a sacrifice, it is an action, transient in its nature, begun and ended all in half an hour. As a Sacrament, it is given to men; as a sacrifice, it is offered to God. As a Sacrament, it is the manna of the soul, the staff of the spiritual life; as a sacrifice it presents again the price of our redemption, the blood of the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world, a propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

By sacrifice, in its widest sense, is meant any good work done to honor God and unite us with Him in holy fellowship. In this sense prayer is a sacrifice, and so is sorrow for sin, of which the Psalmist says, "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit." But in the strict and proper sense, sacrifice means the offering to God and immolation of some sensible thing in token of His sovereign dominion over all creatures, and of our subjection to Him. That which is offered must be something sensible, for sacrifice is an outward sign or token of the worship that is in the heart, and every such sign of inner thought or feeling is, from the nature of the case, perceptible by the senses. God, from the cradle of the race, bade men offer things that are sensible, as when Cain offered the first fruits of the earth and Abel the firstlings of the flock. But that which is offered must be immolated, else it will be only a gift, and no true sacrifice. "For every high priest," says St. Paul, "is ordained to offer" not only "gifts" but

"sacrifices" as well (Heb. viii. 3). Immolation is the real sacrificial action, the distinctive note of sacrifice. Hence, in the olden time the thing offered in sacrifice had always to be destroyed, — if a solid substance, by breaking it up or burning it; if a liquid, by pouring it out on the ground; if an animal, by shedding its blood. And to God alone can a victim be immolated. "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before me." The great end of sacrifice is the worship of God, but it is offered also to satisfy the justice of God for our sins, to obtain favors from Him, and to return Him thanks. Corresponding to these four ends, there were in the Old Law four kinds of sacrifice, — holocausts, or whole burnt offerings, sin offerings, peace offerings, and thanks offerings. A sacrifice is an act of divine worship; and as we must worship God, not after our own caprice, but in the way He has appointed, no one can take upon him to offer sacrifice unless he be called of God as was Aaron. Under the law of nature, from Adam to Moses, the priests were the first born, and also the heads of families; under the Mosaic Law, the sons and descendants of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi; under the New Law, the one high priest is Christ, and men are His ministers, sharing His priesthood forever after the order of Melchisedech.

In all lands, among all peoples, in all forms of religion, Jewish or Pagan, from the beginning of the world down to the coming of Christ, there was sacrifice. The pagan Plutarch testifies that if you were to go round the world you might find cities without walls, or literature, or wealth! but a city in which sacrifice is not offered to obtain blessings and avert evil no one, he says, ever saw. The impulse to offer sacrifice seems to be implanted in the nature of man, at least since the fall. He feels his own weakness, he is conscious of his own sinfulness, and a natural instinct prompts him to seek help and make atonement for sin by immolating a victim to some higher power. The pagans, who knew not the one true God, offered sacrifice to idols; the Jews, of old God's chosen people, offered sacrifice to Jehovah, the maker of heaven and earth, almighty and eternal.

From the very cradle of the race, as I have said, there was sacrifice. It was offered in the outskirts, as it were, of the

earthly paradise, while the pair whose sin and fall made sacrifice a necessity were yet in the flesh. When Noah stepped out of the ark, after the waters of the flood had receded, his first act was to erect an altar and offer a victim to the Most High. So did the patriarchs, by God's own order; so did Moses in the land of Egypt, when the paschal lamb was slain and its blood sprinkled for the deliverance of his people; so did Aaron, the high priest of God, and the men of the tribe of Levi, from generation unto generation, God Himself having set them apart and ordained them for this special purpose.

But the sacrifices of the Old Law, in themselves, were of little worth. Not by the blood of goats and oxen could the sins of the world be blotted out. The sacrifices of the olden time were but symbols; they did but shadow forth the one great and perfect sacrifice of the New Law. "Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldest not: but a body thou hast fitted to me: Holocaust for sin did not please thee. Then said I: Behold I come: in the head of the book it is written of me: that I should do thy will, O God." The words are spoken in the person of our high priest, the Son of God, who came into the world, and was born of a virgin, and thus became also the Son of Man, true God and true man in one person. "Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldest not." God had no pleasure in the sacrifices offered by sinful men, save in so far as they adumbrated the sacrifice of the Sinless One. But He that was sinless was "made sin" for us. By a miracle of His wisdom and power He took upon Himself, without sin, our sinful nature, and by a further miracle of His goodness and mercy blotted out "the handwriting of the decree that was against us, . . . fastening it to the cross." And the atonement He made for sin, the redemption He wrought with His blood, while, on the one hand, a gratuitous act of pure clemency, satisfied, on the other hand, every requirement of the strictest justice. How, it has been asked, is it just that the innocent should suffer for the guilty? The innocent, the Sinless One, suffered, not as sinless, but as having been "made sin" for us. "A body thou has fitted to me." When the Son of God took upon Himself our nature, when He "was made of a woman," and born of a woman, He became, not man merely, but the Son of Man, yea,

of the man who had sinned. "Let us make MAN in our own image and likeness," it was said from the beginning. In creating Adam, God made, not a man, but Man, that is, the whole human race. The Son of God, therefore, in becoming the Son of Man, became a member of the human family, and, on the principle of race solidarity, became answerable for the sins of His fellow men. Had He become man otherwise than by being "made of a woman" and born of a woman, He would not have been of the race of Adam, the fallen race, for the race is propagated by birth. In that case, He would not have been "made sin" for us, nor would the shedding of His blood have been an atonement for sin, since justice requires that satisfaction be made, if not by the person, at least in the nature, that has sinned. "The prince of this world cometh," said Our Lord, "and in me he hath not anything." Neither had he, for Our Lord was personally sinless. But He was racially guilty, for God the Father saw in Him the representative of the family of man, made in the image and likeness of a race of sinners, and therefore delivered over to die, between two of these sinners, upon a cross. "And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst." The two others were sinners, — "malefactors" St. Luke calls them, — but what was their guilt in God's eyes compared with that of the One who, though sinless, had yet been "made sin" for us!

Thus was offered on the hill of Calvary, for the first time in the history of the world, a victim worthy of the Most High God, even His only begotten Son. But that was well-nigh nineteen hundred years ago, and has there been no sacrifice since then? Certainly none other than the one then offered on the altar of the Cross. That was a finished sacrifice, yet in the sense that every work of the eternal is finished — finished, but abiding still. It is written that *God rested on the seventh day from all the works that He made.* Yet Our Lord could say, "The Father worketh still; and I work." The work of creation, and of the institution of things, was finished on the seventh day, but the work of conservation, of the maintenance of things in their primeval con-

stitution, still goes on. Nor is conservation a new work, but the original creative work prolonged forever. God spoke and things came into being, not to pass away, but to endure, and to endure by virtue of the word spoken from the beginning. And the same word, now "made flesh," spoke at the Last Supper, instituting the sacrifice of the New Law in His own body and blood, spoke on the Cross, consummating the sacrifice of His own body and blood, and the selfsame sacrifice still endures by virtue of the selfsame word. "Such a sacrifice," says Cardinal Newman, "was not to be forgotten. It was not to be — it could not be — a mere event in the world's history, which was to be done and over, and was to pass away except in its obscure, unrecognized effects. If that great deed was what we believe it to be, what we know it is, it must remain present though past; it must be a standing fact for all times." Such is this work of the eternal, like Himself, ever ancient and ever new, past yet always present, done and over yet always being done anew, over and over again. "As often as this commemorative sacrifice is celebrated, the work of our redemption is carried on," and will be carried on till that work is done — till the last man has been redeemed. For "the death of the Lord" is to be "shown forth, until he come."

"The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" These words of St. Paul are but an echo of the words of Christ: "This is my body; this is my blood of the new testament. Do this for a commemoration of me." What *this?* This that He did, giving His own body and blood under the forms of bread and wine. Here was a rite and ceremonial, like the rite and ceremonial of the Jewish Pasch, the ceremonial being a breaking and blessing of bread, a blessing and pouring out of wine, the rite a consecration of these elements into the body that was broken and the blood that was shed on the Cross. The bloody sacrifice was offered once, and once for all, without rite or ceremonial. It was offered by the high priest alone, while the men whom He made sharers of His priesthood were scattered as sheep before the wolf. But never was sacrifice offered by a congregation, or body of worshippers, without fitting rite and ceremonial. Therefore did

Christ, with fitting rite and ceremonial, institute, for Christian worshippers, the unbloody sacrifice, which is unbloody, not that it is without real blood, but that the blood is not really shed. And because the blood that is offered is the selfsame blood that was once really shed, the unbloody sacrifice, with its rite and ceremonial, is the selfsame as the bloody sacrifice. Christ, our high priest, trod the winepress alone. But the price, His blood of the New Testament, is a sacrifice to God, a Sacrament and gift to men; as a sacrifice, pleading the merits of His Passion, speaking better than the blood of Abel; as a Sacrament, "cleansing the conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

We read in Genesis that Melchisedech, king of Salem, and priest of the Most High, offered sacrifice in bread and wine. To this Melchisedech, Abraham, though priest himself and patriarch of God's chosen people, offered tithes of all he possessed, thus doing him homage as his superior in priestly rank. Now Melchisedech was a figure of Christ, who is "a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." Therefore Christ has offered sacrifice after the manner of Melchisedech. And because He is "a priest forever," He still does so, in the holy Mass where He is both High Priest and Victim. This precisely is what was foretold by the prophet Malachy — a time when the bloody sacrifices of the Jews should cease, and in every place, from the rising of the sun to its going down, there should be offered to the Most High a clean oblation, and this, too, among the Gentiles, "for great is my name among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts." We have, then, an altar whereof they cannot partake who serve the tabernacle, and whereof they will not partake who, having eyes see not, and having ears hear not, the things that make for their peace.

"For Christ our Pasch is sacrificed." The Christian Pasch followed the Jewish Pasch, and fulfils it. The relation of antitype and type between the two is as striking as it is significant. In the former a lamb was slain and offered; in the latter is slain and offered the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world. The former wrought redemption of the first born from temporal death, and deliverance of God's people from bondage to a tyrant; the latter works redemption of the new born from eternal death,

and deliverance of God's people, both Jew and Gentile, from a far worse bondage, in so much as Satan is a far more heartless tyrant and harder taskmaster than was Pharaoh. The Jew ate the flesh of the lamb with unleavened bread; the Christian eats the flesh of the Lamb under the form of unleavened bread. "I am the living bread that came down from heaven." "And the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." The first Jewish Passover wrought deliverance from bondage; the second passover served but to commemorate the first, and to shadow forth that which was to come. So the first Christian Passover, at the Last Supper and on Calvary, wrought our deliverance; the second, on the altars of our churches, serves to commemorate the first and to apply its merits — for in the New Law is no shadow, but the reality. And just as every subsequent Passover of the Jews, though commemorative and typical, was a true sacrifice, so is every subsequent Christian Passover, though commemorative and symbolic, a true sacrifice, yea, the one true sacrifice of the New Law. But while in each subsequent Jewish Passover a different lamb was slain, and the sacrifice therefore was numerically different from the preceding, in each subsequent Christian Passover the same Lamb is offered and partaken of which was slain once for all on Calvary. The sacrifice is therefore numerically the same as that which was offered at the Last Supper and on the Cross. No explanation need be given, no explanation can be given, why the Mass is a sacrifice, other than this full and ample one, — that it is not a new sacrifice at all, but in all that appertains to the constitution of sacrifice, in its inner essence, in every essential respect, the same sacrifice as that of the Cross; that it is in reality the sacrifice of the Cross, in a mystery and by a miracle of Christ's power, prolonged forever. Every altar is a Calvary, where the same Victim is ever offered by the same High Priest, under the veil of the things that appear to sense.

The Church commands us, on pain of mortal sin, to assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation. Sunday is the Lord's day. The other six days of the week He has made over to us; the first He reserves as His own. And the way He would have us sanctify it, the duty He lays

upon us, is to hear Mass. We are earnestly exhorted to sanctify the Sunday in other ways, to give more time to prayer and meditation, to read good books, to attend the vesper service, to assist at benediction, to visit the sick, to comfort the sorrowful; all these things we are exhorted to do, but we are commanded to hear Mass, and this, as I have said, on pain of mortal sin. The other works are good, are excellent, each in its way, but none of them can supply the place of this one, or make up for default in this. Of course there is such a thing as being excused from hearing Mass on Sunday. We are not called upon to put forth an heroic effort to satisfy this obligation, but we are called upon to make an honest effort; we are called upon to make some exertion and put ourselves to some inconvenience. As for those who live under the shadow of the church, or even within sound of the church bell, there can hardly be any excuse for missing Mass on Sunday save sickness or the like.

And oh, if we did but realize, as did the Christians of the olden time, as the saints of God have done in every age, what a treasure we have in the holy Mass, we surely should set greater store by it, and put forth greater effort to assist at it more frequently and more devoutly. If we had faith even as a grain of mustard seed, we should surmount every obstacle and even move a seeming mountain of difficulty in order to be present at this august sacrifice. For faith assures us that here the mystery of our redemption is indeed renewed; the same body that was pierced for us on Calvary is mystically broken for us on the altar; the same blood that flowed from the wounds in those blessed hands and feet, and trickled from the spear wound in the heart, is once more poured out for us, and cries to heaven with a better pleading than that of Abel. It is good to pray at home, it is good to give alms, it is good to visit the sick, it is good to comfort the sorrowful; but it is better than any of these, better than all of these together, to assist humbly and devoutly at the holy Mass. Through this adorable sacrifice, as the Fathers of Trent tell us, God being appeased, grants grace and the gift of repentance, and pardons sins and crimes even the most enormous. Oh, if we did but know this great gift of God, as the angels know it who come down from heaven in troops whenever it is offered, we should think nothing

of coming miles and miles to be present at holy Mass. We should even be found daily assisting at it, like the sainted Monica, who "never for a day absented herself from the altar whence she knew that Victim to be dispensed, by which the handwriting that was against us is blotted out."[1]

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

SUBJECT

THE MATTER, FORM, AND RITES OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

TEXT

Jesus took the loaves: and when he had given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down. — JOHN vi. 11.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. The external sign in which every sacrament consists is twofold, namely, the *matter,* which is some sensible object; and the *form,* which is the words used by the minister. In the Holy Eucharist bread and wine constitute the matter, and the words of consecration the form of the sacrament. The same divine power which multiplied the loaves of to-day's Gospel also

[1] Confessions of St. Augustine, bk. ix. c. 13.

changes bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

I. The matter of the Eucharist. 1. The bread used for the Mass must of necessity be wheaten, and, in the Latin Church, unleavened. 2. The wine of the Eucharist must be pressed from the grape. According to a very ancient rite derived from the Apostles a little water is mingled with the wine. 3. Bread and wine are most suitable elements for the Holy Eucharist, because, — (a) bread and wine, being very nourishing foods, are aptly suited to signify the spiritual nourishment which this Sacrament causes; (b) as bread and wine are naturally changed into our flesh and blood, it is easy to see how by divine power they can be supernaturally changed into the body and blood of Christ; (c) as bread is made from many grains and wine from many grapes, bread and wine appropriately illustrate the unity of the faithful which this Sacrament effects through charity.

II. The form of the Holy Eucharist. 1. The form, or words of consecration of the bread are the words which Christ used at the Last Supper, namely, "This is my body." That these words express the real change of bread into the body of our Lord is clear from Scripture, from the Fathers and tradition, and from reason. 2. The form or words used in the consecration of the wine are the words that Christ pronounced over the chalice at the Last Supper, namely, "This is my blood." That these words really express the change of wine into our Lord's blood is also clear from Scripture, tradition, and reason. 3. By reason of natural concomitance Christ whole and entire is present under each species.

III. The rites observed in administering Holy Communion. 1. Communion is administered to the faithful under the form of bread alone for many good reasons: (a) this is necessary to avoid accidents and irreverence; (b) if the species of wine were preserved in the tabernacle it would corrupt; (c) to many persons wine is nauseating; (d) wine is extremely scarce in many countries; (e) Christ is just as much present under one species

as under both. 2. The practice of the Church of giving Communion under one form is merely a matter of discipline, and can be changed if the Church so wishes. That this practice, however, is lawful is evident: (a) from the words of Christ, who made the same promises to those that eat only, as to those that both eat and drink (John vi. 52, 55, 58); (b) from the history of the early Church, for we know that in early times Communion under one form only was given to the faithful in their homes during persecutions, and likewise to prisoners, infants, and the sick. 3. To validly ordained clergy alone Christ gave the power of consecrating and administering the Holy Eucharist.

Lessons. 1. Admire the wisdom and power of Christ who chose such apt means to feed us with His body and blood. Let us imitate the multitude of to-day's Gospel who marvelled at the miracle they had witnessed. 2. The people in the Gospel wished to make Christ their King. Let us desire that He may come to us to reign over our souls in Holy Communion.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part II

THE MATTER OF THIS SACRAMENT

To consecrate the Sacrament validly, to instruct the faithful in that of which it is the symbol, and to kindle in their souls an ardent desire of possessing the invaluable treasure which it signifies, it is of vital importance that the pastor make himself acquainted with its matter. The matter of this Sacrament is twofold, consisting of wheaten bread, and of wine pressed from the grape, mixed with a little water. The first element, then (of the other we shall treat hereafter), is bread, as the Evangelists Matthew,[1] Mark,[2] and Luke[3] testify. Christ our Lord, say they, took bread into His hands, blessed, and brake it, saying, "THIS IS MY BODY"; and according to St. John, He called himself bread in these words: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven."[4]

[1] Matt. xxvi. 26. [2] Mark xiv. 22. [3] Luke xxii. 19.
[4] John vi. 41. See de consecr. dist. 2, cc. 1, 2, 55, where the decrees of Pope Alexander on this matter are quoted, and also Cypr. lib. 2, Epist. 3; Ambr. l. 4, de Sacram. c. 4; Iren. l. 4, c. 34, et l. 5, c. 2.

THE SACRAMENTAL BREAD IS WHEATEN

Since, however, there are different sorts of bread, composed of different materials, such as wheat, barley, pease; or made in different manners, such as leavened and unleavened, it is to be observed that with regard to the former the sacramental matter, according to the words of our Lord, should consist of wheaten bread; for when we simply say bread, we mean, according to common usage, "wheaten bread."[1] This is also distinctly declared by a figure of the Holy Eucharist in the Old Testament: the Lord commanded that the loaves of proposition which prefigured this Sacrament should be made of "fine flour."[2]

THE BREAD IS ALSO UNLEAVENED

Since, therefore, wheaten bread alone is the proper matter of this Sacrament, a doctrine handed down by Apostolic tradition and confirmed by the authority of the Catholic Church, it may also be inferred from the circumstances in which the Eucharist was instituted, that this wheaten bread should be unleavened. It was consecrated and instituted by our Lord on the first day of unleavened bread, a time when the Jews were prohibited by the law to have leavened bread in their houses.[3] Should the words of the Evangelist St. John, who says that all this was done before the Passover, be objected, the objection is one of easy solution. By the day before the Pasch,[4] St. John understands the same day which the other Evangelists designate as "the first day of unleavened bread." He had for object, principally, to mark the *natural* day, which does not commence until sunrise; and the first *natural* day of the Pasch, therefore, being Friday, the day before the Pasch, means Thursday, on the evening of which the festival of unleavened bread began, and on which our Lord celebrated the Pasch and instituted the Holy Eucharist. Hence, St. Chrysostom understands the first day of unleavened bread to be the day on the evening of which the unleavened bread was to be eaten.[5] The

[1] St. Thomas, p. 3, q. 74. [2] Lev. xxiv. 5.

[3] Matt. xxvi. 17; Mark xiv. 12; Luke xxii. 7. See Book 3 of the Decretals, title de celebr. Missarum, last chapter, in which Pope Honorius II is quoted.

[4] John xiii. 1. [5] In Matt. hom. 83.

peculiar propriety of the consecration of unleavened bread, to express that integrity and purity of heart with which the faithful should approach this Sacrament, we learn from these words of the Apostle: "Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new paste, as you are unleavened. For Christ our Pasch is sacrificed. Therefore let us feast, not with the old leaven, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." [1]

UNLEAVENED BREAD NOT ESSENTIAL

This property of the bread, however, is not to be considered so essential that its absence must render the Sacrament null. Both kinds, leavened and unleavened bread, are called by the common name, and have each the nature and properties of bread.[2] No one, however, should on his own individual authority have the temerity to depart from the laudable rite observed in the Church to which he belongs; and such departure is the less warranted in priests of the Latin Church, commanded as they are by authority of the supreme Pontiff to celebrate the sacred mysteries with unleavened bread only.[3] With regard to the first element of this Sacrament, this exposition will be found sufficiently comprehensive. We may, however, observe in addition, that the quantity of bread to be used is not determined, depending as it does upon the number of communicants, a matter which cannot be defined.

THE SECOND ELEMENT IS WINE OF THE GRAPE, MINGLED WITH A LITTLE WATER

We come next to treat of the second element of this Sacrament, which forms part of its matter, and consists of wine pressed from the grape, mingled with a little water. That our Lord made use of wine in the institution of this Sacrament has been at all times the doctrine of the Catholic Church. He Himself said, "I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day." [4] On these words of our Lord, St. Chrysostom observes: "*Of the fruit of the vine,* which certainly produces wine, not

[1] 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.
[2] C. of Florence, last session.
[3] Lib. 2, decret. de celebr. miss. c. final.
[4] Matt. xxvi. 29; Mark xiv. 25.

water"; as if he had it in view, even at so early a period, to crush by the evidence of these words, the heresy which asserted that water alone is to be used in these mysteries.[1] With the wine used in the sacred mysteries, the Church of God, however, has always mingled water, because, as we know on the authority of councils and the testimony of St. Cyprian, our Lord Himself did so;[2] and also because this admixture renews the recollection of the blood and water which issued from His sacred side. The word "water" we also find used in the Apocalypse to signify the people,[3] and therefore water mixed with wine signifies the union of the faithful with Christ their head. This rite, derived from apostolic tradition, the Catholic Church has at all times observed. The propriety of mingling water with the wine rests, it is true, on authority so grave that to omit the practice would be to incur the guilt of mortal sin; however, its sole omission would be insufficient to render the Sacrament null. But care must be taken not only to mingle water with the wine, but also to mingle it in small quantity; for in the opinion of ecclesiastical writers the water is changed into wine. Hence, these words of Pope Honorius: "A pernicious abuse has prevailed for a long time among you, of using in the holy sacrifice a greater quantity of water than of wine; whereas in accordance with the rational practice of the Universal Church, the wine should be used in much greater quantity than the water."[4]

We have now treated of the two and only elements of this Sacrament; and although some dared to do otherwise, many decrees of the Church justly enact that no celebrant offer anything but bread and wine.[5]

PECULIAR APTITUDE OF THESE ELEMENTS

We now come to consider the aptitude of these two elements to declare those things of which they are the sensible signs. In the first place, they signify Christ, the true life of the world; for our Lord Himself has said: "My flesh is meat indeed: and my

[1] Hom. 83 in Matt.
[2] Cyp. lib. 1, epist. 3; C. of Trent, sess. 22, de sacrif. miss. c. 7, can. 9.
[3] Apoc. xvii. 15. [4] L. 3, Decretal, de cel. miss. c. 13.
[5] See de consecr. dist. 2, cc. 1, 2, seq.

blood is drink indeed."[1] Since, therefore, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ nourishes to eternal life those who receive it with purity and holiness, with great propriety is this Sacrament composed principally of those elements which sustain life, thus giving the faithful to understand that the soul is nurtured with grace by a participation of the precious body and blood of Christ. These elements serve also to prove the dogma of the real presence. Seeing, as we do, that bread and wine are every day changed by the power of nature into human flesh and blood, we are, by the obvious analogy of the fact, the more readily induced to believe that the substance of the bread and wine is changed, by the celestial benediction, into the real body and blood of Christ.[2] This admirable change also contributes to illustrate what takes place in the soul. As the bread and wine, although invisibly, are really and substantially changed into the body and blood of Christ, so are we, although interiorly and invisibly, yet really, renewed to life, receiving in the Sacrament of the Eucharist the true life. Moreover, the body of the Church, although one and undivided, consists of the union of many members, and of this mysterious union nothing is more strikingly illustrative than bread and wine. Bread is made from many grains, wine is pressed from many grapes, and thus are we too, although many, closely united by this mysterious bond of union, and made as it were one body.

THE FORM TO BE USED IN THE CONSECRATION OF THE BREAD IS PROVED FROM SCRIPTURE

The form to be used in the consecration of the bread we now come to explain; not, however, with a view that the faithful should be taught these mysteries unless necessity require it (a knowledge of them is obligatory on ecclesiastics alone), but to obviate the possibility of shameful mistakes on the part of the celebrant, through ignorance of the form. From the Evangelists Matthew and Luke, and also from the Apostle, we learn that the form of the Sacrament consists in these words: "THIS IS MY BODY." We read that when they had supped, "Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to his disciples, and said: Take

[1] John vi. 56. [2] Damas. l. 4, de fid. orthod. c. 14.

ye, and eat. THIS IS MY BODY."[1] And this form of consecration, made use of by Jesus Christ, has been uniformly and inviolably observed in the Catholic Church.

PROOF FROM THE FATHERS AND COUNCILS

The testimonies of the Fathers in proof of the legitimacy of this form may be here omitted; to enumerate them would prove an endless task. The decree of the Council of Florence to the same effect, because of easy access to all, it is also unnecessary to cite. The necessity of every other proof is superseded by these words of the Saviour: "Do this for a commemoration of me."[2] This command of our Lord embraces not only what He did, but also what He said; and especially did it refer to those words which He uttered not less for the purpose of effecting, than of signifying what they effected.[3]

PROOF FROM REASON

That these words constitute the form is easily proved from reason alone. The form of a Sacrament is that which signifies what is accomplished in the Sacrament. What is accomplished in the Eucharist, that is, the conversion of the bread into the true body of our Lord, the words "This is my body" signify and declare; they therefore constitute the form. The words of the Evangelist, "he blessed," go to support this reasoning. They are equivalent to saying: "taking bread, he blessed it, saying, This is my body."[4]

The words, "take and eat," it is true, precede the words "This is my body," but they evidently express the use, not the consecration, of the matter, and cannot therefore constitute the form. They must, indeed, be pronounced by the priest, just as the conjunction "for" must be also pronounced in the consecration of the body and blood, but they are not essential to the validity of

[1] Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24.

[2] Luke xxii. 19. In decret. de sacram.; C. of Trent, sess. 13, c. 1.

[3] See Amb. l. 4, de sacram. cc. 4, 5; Chrys. hom. de prodit. Judae; Aug. l. 3, de Trinit. c. 4; Iren. l. 4, contr. haer. c. 34; Orig. lib. 8, contr. Celsum.; Hesich. l. 6, in Levit. c. 22; Cyril. Alex. epist. ad Calosorum episcop.; Tertul. l. 4, contr. Marc. in Hiear. epist. 1.

[4] Matt. xxvi. 26.

the Sacrament; otherwise it would follow that if the Sacrament were not to be administered to any one, it should not, or even could not, be consecrated, whereas, that the priest by pronouncing the words of our Lord, according to the institution and practice of the Church, truly consecrates the proper matter of the Sacrament, although it should afterwards happen never to be administered, admits not the least shadow of doubt.

THE FORM TO BE USED IN THE CONSECRATION OF THE WINE PROVED FROM SCRIPTURE

The form of the consecration of the wine, the other element of this Sacrament, for the reasons assigned with regard to the bread, should be accurately known, and clearly understood by the priest. We are firmly to believe that the form of consecrating the chalice is comprehended in these words: "THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT: THE MYSTERY OF FAITH: WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU, AND FOR MANY TO THE REMISSION OF SINS."[1] These words are for the most part taken from Scripture. Some of them, however, have been preserved in the Church by apostolic tradition. The words "This is the chalice" are taken from St. Luke,[2] and are also mentioned by the Apostle.[3] The words that immediately follow, "of my blood," or "my blood of the new testament, . . . which shall be shed for you, and for many to the remission of sins," are taken in part from St. Luke[4] and in part from St. Matthew.[5] The words "and eternal," and also the words "the mystery of faith," have been transmitted to us by holy tradition, the interpreter and guardian of Catholic unity. Of the legitimacy of this form we cannot entertain a shadow of doubt if we attend to what has been already said of the form used in the consecration of the bread. The form to be used in the consecration of this element should, confessedly, consist of words signifying that the substance of the wine is changed into the blood of our Lord, — this the words already cited clearly declare, — and therefore they alone exclusively constitute the form.

[1] Decretal. l. 3, de celeb. miss. c. 6.
[2] Luke xxii. 20.
[3] 1 Cor. xi. 25.
[4] Luke xxii. 20.
[5] Matt. xxvi. 28.

THREE EFFECTS OF THE BLOOD OF THE SAVIOUR

They also express certain admirable fruits produced by the blood of Christ, which was shed on Calvary — fruits which belong in a special manner to this Sacrament. Of these, one is admission into the eternal inheritance to which we have acquired a right by "the new and everlasting testament."[1] Another is admission to righteousness by "the mystery of faith," for "God hath proposed" Jesus "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to the showing of his justice, . . . that he himself may be just, and the justifier of him, who is of the faith of Jesus Christ."[2] A third is the remission of sin.[3]

THE FORM OF CONSECRATING THE WINE EXPLAINED

But as the words of consecration are replete with mysteries, and are most appropriate in their application to our present subject, they demand a more minute consideration. When, therefore, it is said, "This is the chalice of my blood,"[4] these words are to be understood to mean, "This is my blood which is contained in this chalice." The mention of "the chalice," at the moment of its consecration, to be the drink of the faithful, is peculiarly appropriate; without its mention as the vessel in which it is contained, the words, "This is my blood," would not seem sufficiently to designate this supernatural species of drink. Next follow the words, "of the New Testament." These are added to give us to understand that the blood of the Saviour is not now given figuratively, as in the Old Law, of which we read in the Apostle, that without blood a testament is not dedicated,[5] but really and truly given, a prerogative peculiar to the New Testament. Hence the Apostle says, "Therefore he [Christ] is the mediator of the New Testament: that by means of his death, . . . they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance."[6] The word "eternal" refers to the eternal inheritance, our title to which has been purchased by Christ the Lord, the eternal Testator. The words "mystery of faith," which are added, exclude not the reality, but signify that what lies con-

[1] Heb. x. 20; xiii. 20.
[2] Rom. iii. 25, 26.
[3] Heb. ix. 12.
[4] Decret. l. 3, de cel. Miss. c. 8.
[5] Heb. ix. 18.
[6] Heb. ix. 15.

cealed under the veil of mystery, and is far removed from the ken of mortal eye, is to be believed with the certainty of faith. Here, however, these words bear an import entirely different from that which they have when applied to Baptism. Here the mystery of faith consists in this, that we see by faith the blood of Christ, veiled under the species of wine; but Baptism is properly called by us "the Sacrament of faith," by the Greeks, "the mystery of faith," because it comprises the entire profession of the faith of Christ. There is also another reason why the blood of our Lord is called "the mystery of faith." In its belief human reason experiences the greatest difficulties, because faith proposes to us to believe that the Son of God, God and man, suffered death for our redemption, a death signified by the Sacrament of his blood. His passion, therefore, is more appropriately commemorated here in the words, "which shall be shed for the remission of sins," than at the consecration of His body. The separate consecration of the blood places before our eyes in more vivid colors His passion, crucifixion, and death.

The additional words, "for you and for many," are taken, some from St. Matthew,[1] some from St. Luke,[2] and under the guidance of the Spirit of God combined together by the Catholic Church. They serve emphatically to designate the fruit and advantages of His passion. Looking to the efficacy of the passion, we believe that the Redeemer shed His blood for the salvation of all men; but looking to the advantages which mankind derive from its efficacy, we find at once that they are not extended to the whole, but to a large proportion of the human race. When, therefore, our Lord said, "for you," He meant either those who were present, or those whom He had chosen from among the Jews, among whom were, with the exception of Judas, all His disciples with whom He then conversed; but when He adds, "for many," He would include the remainder of the elect from among the Jews and the Gentiles. With great propriety, therefore, were the words *for all* omitted, because here the fruit of the passion is alone spoken of, and to the elect only did His passion bring the fruit of salvation. This the words of the Apostle declare when he says, that Christ was offered once, to

[1] Matt. xxvi. 28. [2] Luke xxii. 20.

take away the sins of many;[1] and the same truth is conveyed in these words of our Lord recorded by St. John: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me: because they are thine."[2] The words of consecration also convey many other truths, — truths, however, which the pastor by the daily meditation and study of divine things, and aided by grace from above, will not find it difficult to discover.

THE SACRAMENT TO BE RECEIVED UNDER BOTH KINDS BY THE OFFICIATING PRIEST ONLY, AND WHY

As to the rite to be observed in the administration of this Sacrament, the pastor will teach that the law of the Church interdicts its administration under both kinds to any but to the officiating priest, unless by special permission of the Church. Christ, it is true, as has been explained by the Council of Trent,[3] instituted and administered to His Apostles, at His last supper, this great Sacrament under both kinds; but it does not follow of necessity that by doing so He established a law rendering its administration to the faithful under both species imperative. Speaking of this Sacrament He Himself frequently mentions it under one kind only. "If," says He, "any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world," and "He that eateth this bread, shall live for ever."[4] The Church, no doubt, was influenced by numerous and cogent reasons, not only to approve, but to confirm by solemn decree the general practice of communicating under one species. In the first place, the greatest caution was necessary to avoid accident or indignity, which must become almost inevitable if the chalice were administered in a crowded assemblage.

In the next place, the Holy Eucharist should be at all times in readiness for the sick, and if the species of wine remained long unconsumed, it was to be feared that it might turn acid. Besides,

[1] Heb. ix. 26. [2] John xvii. 9.

[3] Sess. 21, De Communione sub utraque specie, can. 1, 2, 3.

[4] John vi. 52. 59. That the reception of this sacrament under one kind suffices for perfect communion we learn from Tertull. lib. 2, ad uxorem; Cypr. de Lapsis; Orig. hom. 13, in Exod; Basil. epist. ad Caesar patr.; Aug. ep. 86; Jerome, in Apol. ad Pammach; Chrysost. hom. 41, operis imperf. in Matt.

there are many who cannot bear the taste or smell of wine. Lest, therefore, what is intended for the nutriment of the soul should prove noxious to the health of the body, the Church, in her wisdom, has sanctioned its administration under the species of bread alone. We may also observe that in many places wine is extremely scarce, nor can it be brought from distant countries without incurring very heavy expense and encountering very tedious and difficult journeys.

Finally (a circumstance which principally influenced the Church in establishing this practice), means were to be devised to crush the heresy which denied that Christ, whole and entire, is contained under either species, and asserted that the body is contained under the species of bread without the blood, and the blood under the species of wine without the body. This object was attained by communion under the species of bread alone, which places, as it were, sensibly before our eyes the truth of the Catholic faith. Those who have written expressly on this subject will, if it appear necessary, furnish the pastor with additional reasons for the practice of the Catholic Church in the administration of the Holy Eucharist.

PRIESTS ALONE ARE THE MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

To omit nothing doctrinal on so important a subject, we now come to speak of the minister of the sacrament, a point, however, on which scarcely any one is ignorant. The pastor then will teach that to priests alone has been given power to consecrate and administer the Holy Eucharist. That the unvarying practice of the Church has also been that the faithful receive the Sacrament from the hand of the priest, and that the priest communicate himself, has been explained by the Council of Trent.[1] The same holy Council has shown that this practice is always to be scrupulously adhered to, stamped, as it is, with the authoritative impress of Apostolic tradition, and sanctioned by the illustrious example of our Lord Himself, who with His own hands consecrated and gave to His disciples His most sacred body.[2]

[1] Sess. 13, c. 10. [2] Matt. xxvi. 26; Matt. xiv. 22.

THE LAITY ARE PROHIBITED TO TOUCH THE SACRED VESSELS, ETC.

To safeguard as much as possible the dignity of this august Sacrament, not only is its administration confined exclusively to the priestly order, but the Church has also, by an express law, prohibited any but those who are consecrated to religion, unless in case of necessity, to touch the sacred vessels, the linen, or other immediate necessaries for consecration. Priests and people may hence learn what piety and holiness they should possess who consecrate, administer, or receive the Holy of Holies. The Eucharist, however, as was observed with regard to the other Sacraments, whether administered by holy or unholy hands, is equally valid. It is of faith that the efficacy of the Sacraments does not depend on the merit of the minister, but on the virtue and power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With regard to the Eucharist as a Sacrament, these are the principal points which demanded explanation.

Sermons

The Matter and Form of the Eucharist

BY THE RT. REV. ALEXANDER MACDONALD, D.D.

All of the seven sacraments instituted by our blessed Lord are holy in themselves and means of holiness to those who receive them worthily. But there is one of them that by common consent of believers is never spoken of save as the Holy or the Most Holy Sacrament. The other sacraments contain grace and are channels of grace; this contains the Author of grace, and is the unfailing fountain of all grace. As the sun is the centre of the system of lesser bodies that circle round it, and the source of light and warmth to all things that live on the earth, so is the Holy Eucharist the centre of the other sacraments, and the source of spiritual light and warmth to the souls of men.

The Holy Eucharist, as the catechism teaches us, is the Sacrament that contains the body and blood, soul and divinity, of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. The Eucharist is a sacrifice also; but with that aspect of it I will not deal now. For the present I will consider it only as a Sacrament, that is to

say, a sensible sign of grace instituted by Christ Our Lord for the sanctification of souls. We discern in it the three things needful to constitute a Sacrament. The bread and wine together with the words of consecration are the sensible sign; the words of Our Lord at the Last Supper are the guarantee of divine institution; and as for the conferring of grace, the Eucharist, as has already been observed, contains the very Author of grace.

By virtue of the words of consecration the body of Our Lord is present under the form of bread and the blood under the form of wine. But since the body has life in it, for having once risen from the dead Our Lord now dieth no more, where the body is there in like manner is the soul and the divinity. For this reason the Church is enabled to administer the Sacrament of the Eucharist under one kind. He who receives the Sacrament under the form of bread alone receives a perfect Sacrament, since Christ whole and entire is present under the form of bread. It is to a perfect sacrifice, not to a perfect Sacrament, that the two elements in the Eucharist are essential.

The form of this Sacrament are the words of Our Lord. The matter is wheaten bread, and wine from the grape. The minister is a validly ordained priest. The subject is a validly baptized person. But not every one who is capable of receiving the Eucharist can lawfully receive it. The person who is in mortal sin can receive it neither lawfully nor fruitfully; and it is not to be given to children, according to the present discipline of the Church, till they reach the years of discretion. Nor is it to be given to insane persons, or people bereft of their senses. But a child in danger of death, who knows enough to distinguish the Eucharist from other food, should receive it as viaticum: and any insane person who once had the use of reason and led a Christian life may receive the viaticum at the hour of death, so there be no danger of irreverence.

The Church enjoins upon the faithful to receive Holy Communion at least once a year, as well as towards the end of life by way of viaticum. This twofold obligation imposed by the Church is founded upon the divine precept expressed in the words of Our Lord, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." We are not to

understand that the Church deems it quite enough to receive Holy Communion once a year. The words of the Lateran Council are, "at least once a year." The Church says to her children, "I bid you perform your Easter duty on pain of being liable to be cut off from me as lifeless and withered members, on pain of spiritual death, of spiritual starvation." Now if a man is to live the life of grace and grow spiritually, it is of course not enough just to stave off starvation. The Church would wish to see her children often, even daily, at the altar where the bread of life is dispensed. At the same time she does not lay this upon their consciences, being a wise mother, wise with the wisdom that is from above. She knows that growth is not a thing that can be got by forcing, and that this is as true in the spiritual as it is in the physical world. She realizes indeed that one who is stubbornly bent on keeping from food altogether must be made to take food lest he starve. But she recognizes that such action is not to be resorted to save in this extreme case, and that it is only one who eats with a will and has a relish for his food that can get any real benefit from it. She wishes us to create a relish for the food of our souls by the exercise of the virtues that become a Christian, — by honesty, truthfulness, sobriety, chastity; to foster a spiritual taste by habits of self-denial, — that we may hunger after this divine food, and so be found in the number of those whom Our Lord declares blessed, because, having a hunger after righteousness, they shall be filled.

A word in conclusion on the symbolism of this Sacrament. Most aptly does bread symbolize the effects of it. Hence Our Lord, in the sixth chapter of St. John, speaks of it in terms of this symbol only. Bread is the staff of life. It nourishes, fosters growth, imparts strength, sates the hungry. A fourfold corresponding effect in the spiritual order is produced by the Eucharist, which is the bread of life.

And first, the Eucharist nourishes the life of the soul. "He that eateth me," says Our Lord, "the same also shall live by me." And again: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." Nothing could be clearer. But it is only the living who eat bread and are nourished by it. Therefore the man who is dead in mortal sin is not

fit to eat the bread of life. Instead of getting life from it, he does but find fresh cause of death and cripple his chance of ever coming to life again.

The Eucharist fosters the growth of the spiritual life. In the natural order, man's growth is confined to the period between birth and adult age. Again, in the natural order man attains a certain stature, which he may not overpass. Spiritual growth, on the other hand, is not limited to a fixed period of time, but extends over the whole of this mortal life. Neither is it confined within fixed bounds, for there are no bounds to the possible, and we are bidden to be perfect even as Our Father in heaven is perfect. We shall "reach the measure of the years of the fulness of Christ" only by feeding on the food that Christ has given us. Alas! that so many souls should be stunted in growth and starved, while this divine banquet is daily spread out before them. For too many Christians the springtime of spiritual growth comes only when the hair is gray and the body bent with years.

The Eucharist gives strength to the soul. We are laborers in Christ's vineyard; and we are soldiers of Christ. But who can work without bread? Or what soldier can stand day after day in the fighting line if he be without his rations? The man that is famished, starved, is fit for nothing. We cannot do Christ's work in the world, or fight His battles, unless we get strength from the bread of the strong. The prophet went a day's journey into the wilderness and was faint, and lay and slept under a juniper tree. But when he arose and ate of the bread that was baked in the ashes, he went in the strength of it forty days and as many nights to Horeb the mount of God. So we faint ones are fed by Christ in the wilderness of this world. Even as He multiplied the five loaves in the desert, and with them fed the five thousand, so He multiplies without limit the bread of life, and with it feeds the multitudes who else must perish of hunger, far from home.

Lastly, the Eucharist sates the hunger of the soul. Who has not at some time or other felt the pangs of bodily hunger? And even if such a one there be, yet is there no one but has known the hunger after happiness, the hunger of the heart. Men seek to satisfy this hunger with what are called the good

things of this world. They are even fain to feed on the husks of swine, like the prodigal of old. But if they would keep from starving, they needs must return to the Father's house to receive the bread of life. God alone can satisfy the hunger of the heart. But the heart that God feeds must fast from earthly food, even as one must fast from bodily food to feed on the bread of life. "If the heart were all expended here," says one who was fed of God, "nothing of it would be left for heaven, and I wish to take that which loves me into the other world. Let us not waste on creatures what was made for the Creator. Let us learn to fast from earthly food that we may hunger for the divine banquet in which Christ is received, the memory of His passion renewed, in which the soul is filled with, and a pledge is given us of, future glory.

The Matter and Form of the Eucharist

BY THE REV. P. HEHEL, S.J.

I. *The Matter.* In the holy Sacrament of the Altar the matter is twofold, bread and wine, which by the words of consecration become respectively the Body and Blood of Christ. These words are therefore the form of the Sacrament.

(*a*) All the evangelists state clearly that bread is the matter; no Sacrament is so well defined as this. St. Matthew (xxvi. 26), St. Mark (xiv. 22), and St. Luke (xxii. 19) all say that Christ took bread and blessed it, and broke it, saying, "This is my body." St. John (vi. 51) records that our Lord said: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever."

Bread is made of various kinds of flour, and may be either leavened or unleavened. The Catholic Church requires that the bread used in the Sacrament be made of wheat, because (a) as a rule, in speaking of bread, people mean wheaten bread, (b) in Leviticus the loaves of proposition, which were a type of this Sacrament, are ordered to be made of wheat, and (c) the tradition of the Church is that the Apostles used wheaten bread for this purpose.

In the Latin rite it must not be leavened or made with yeast,

because our Lord instituted this Sacrament on the feast of unleavened bread. On that day no Jew would have touched leavened bread, so we may assume that Christ used bread that was unleavened. In the first epistle of the Corinthians (v. 7, 8) St. Paul bears witness to this fact, and bids all who approach the Lord's table: "Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new paste, as you are unleavened. For Christ our Pasch is sacrificed. Therefore let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The Apostle refers here to the custom of using unleavened bread at this Sacrament, in order to teach the faithful that they ought to come to it with hearts free from all leaven of wickedness.

The Greeks use leavened bread, and the Catholic Church allows them to do so, because wheaten bread that is leavened is still true bread, and thus valid matter of the Sacrament. This practice is permissible, however, only in the Greek and not in the Latin Church.

(*b*) The other matter of the Sacrament is wine, that must be made from grapes, for that our Lord used such wine is clear from the words: "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mark xiv. 25).

A little water is mixed with the wine for three reasons: (1) because there is a very old tradition that Christ Himself added water to the wine; (2) because blood and water flowed from His pierced side; (3) because in the Apocalypse water represents the multitude of the faithful who are in this Sacrament united with Christ, as the water is mingled with the wine and changed with it into His Blood.

(*c*) God in His boundless love of us desires not only to be worshipped, but to be in close contact with us, and for this reason He chose bread and wine to be the matter of this Sacrament. They are the most generally used articles of food, and so are especially adapted to be the matter of the Sacrament, that is the food of our souls. They serve also to remind us of our Lord's sufferings, for the bread represents His body, given for us, and the wine His Blood, shed for our sake.

We have seen that this Sacrament is called Holy Communion, because it unites together all who participate in it, and bread and wine both symbolize this union, for bread is one substance made up of many single grains of corn, and wine is prepared from many single grapes.

The bread and the wine help us to some extent to realize how bread can become our Lord's Body and wine His Blood. Our daily food becomes our flesh and blood through the action of the natural forces of the body; and if these can effect such a transformation, why should not God's almighty word suffice to make bread cease to be bread, and become the Body of Christ?

We must bear in mind that bread and wine are not a Sacrament until the form is added to the matter.

II. *The Form.* The words "This is my body," "This is my blood," constitute the form of the Sacrament. As soon as a duly ordained priest, having the intention to consecrate the elements, says these words over the bread and wine, they become respectively the Body and Blood of Christ, in virtue of the power given by God to these words.

There can be no doubt about their being the true Sacramental form, for they are the very words which Christ used Himself and prescribed for others. All the evangelists bear witness to them. "And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke: and gave to his disciples, and said: "Take ye, and eat. *This is my Body.* And taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. *For this is my blood* of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 26–28).

Being our Lord's own words, whenever they are uttered over bread and wine by a successor of the Apostles, on whom He conferred the power, they change them into His Body and Blood. Until they are uttered, there is no Sacrament. Besides effecting this great change, the words themselves are full of meaning, for they reveal to us that after the consecration, not only are Christ's Body and Blood present on the altar, but they contain also the benefit to us which He purchased for us on the Cross.

At first sight it might seem that our Lord did not shed His Blood for *all,* but for the Apostles and many others. This, how-

ever, is a mistake. He died, as He was born, for *all* without distinction, and yet many are lost; His sacred Blood cannot be applied to them, because they will not have it, and the benefits of His Passion are limited to those who by their faith and good works evince a desire to attain to everlasting happiness. When therefore our Lord said that He shed His Blood for the Apostles and for many, He was speaking with the foreknowledge that they would receive the benefits of His death, but others would reject them. In the same way it is written in Hebrews (ix. 28): "Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many."

This is a solemn warning for all of us, whenever we are present at Holy Mass and hear the words of consecration. Unless we do our best to participate in the merits of His Passion, it will, as far as we are concerned, all be in vain; all His suffering and death will be wasted.

If a man is determined to drown himself, it is all in vain that we risk our lives in attempting to save him; he plunges into the water again as soon as he is brought to land. In the same way, it is all in vain that Christ died to save us from eternal destruction if we insist upon perishing. How can we waste His precious Blood by allowing it to have been shed to no purpose?

O Lord, Thou who art truly present under the forms of bread and wine, mercifully look upon us, and draw us to Thee, kindling in our hearts a holy love of Thee, so that we may flee from sin and self-indulgence. Remember the souls which Thou hast purchased by shedding Thy precious Blood, and preserve us from sin.

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PASSION SUNDAY

SUBJECT

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR SAVIOUR'S PASSION

TEXT

By his own blood entered once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption. — HEB. ix. 11.

They took up stones therefore to cast at him. But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the Temple. — JOHN viii. 59.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. The scene of to-day's Gospel was at the feast of Tabernacles, in the autumn of the year before our Lord's death. The Jews, aroused to violence over the rebuking words of Jesus, sought to kill Him by stoning, but since other circumstances and another time had been eternally decreed for His passion and death, He easily escaped their hands, as before at Nazareth He had eluded the fury of His own townsmen. Since this Gospel, however, shows us how great and how long continued was the hatred of the Jews for our Lord, it is appropriately read on this Sunday when we begin the solemn commemoration of His passion.

I. **Who it was that suffered.** 1. The Creator suffered for the creature, holiness for unholiness. 2. The whole of nature was convulsed at the sight of its Maker's agony.

II. **What He suffered.** 1. Christ's sufferings were so great that the mere anticipation of them caused a sweat of blood. 2. Our Lord suffered torture in every part of His body. 3. All ranks and conditions of men contributed to His sufferings. 4. His agony was increased by the nature of His sufferings and by the perfection of His body. 5. His mental sufferings were extreme.

III. Why He suffered. (1) Christ suffered to deliver us from sin, from the tyranny of Satan, and from the debt of punishment; (2) to reconcile us to God and to reopen for us the gates of heaven; (3) to make for us a satisfaction full and complete and most acceptable to God; (4) to leave us by His passion an illustrious example of the exercise of every virtue.

Conclusion. 1. From the bitter passion and death of the God-man we should learn the enormity of sin. 2. As Christ freely suffered for us, so we should patiently bear our crosses for Him: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. xvi. 24).

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article IV of the Creed

THE PASSION OF CHRIST. THE DIGNITY OF HIM WHO SUFFERS

When the faithful have once attained the knowledge of these things, the pastor will next proceed to explain those particulars of the passion and death of Christ which may enable them if not to comprehend, at least to contemplate, the infinitude of so stupendous a mystery. And first we are to consider who it is that suffers. To declare, or even to conceive in thought, His dignity, is not given to man. Of Him St. John says, that He is "the Word" which "was with God";[1] and the apostle describes Him in sublime terms, saying that this is He whom God "hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high."[2] In a word, Jesus Christ, the man-God, suffers! The Creator suffers for the creature, the Master for the servant. *He* suffers by whom the elements, the heavens, men and angels were created, of whom, by whom, and in whom, "are all things."[3]

[1] John i. 1, 2. [2] Heb. i. 2, 3. [3] Rom. xi. 36.

REFLECTION

It cannot therefore be a matter of surprise that while He agonized under such an accumulation of torments the whole frame of the universe was convulsed, and, as the Scriptures inform us, "the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent," and "the sun was darkened," and "there was darkness over all the earth."[1] If, then, even mute and inanimate nature sympathized with the sufferings of her dying Lord, let the faithful conceive, if they can, with what torrents of tears they, the "living stones" of the edifice,[2] should manifest their sorrow.

REASONS WHY HE SUFFERED; FIRST REASON, HIS LOVE OF US

The reasons why the Saviour suffered are also to be explained, that thus the greatness and intensity of the divine love towards us may the more fully appear. Should it then be asked why the Son of God underwent the torments of His most bitter passion, we shall find the principal causes in the hereditary contagion of primeval guilt; in the vices and crimes which have been perpetrated from the beginning of the world to the present day; and in those which shall be perpetrated to the consummation of time. In His death and passion the Son of God contemplated the atonement of all the sins of all ages, with a view to efface them forever, by offering for them to his Eternal Father a superabundant satisfaction; and thus the principal cause of His passion will be found in His love of us.

SECOND REASON, TO ATONE FOR ORIGINAL AND ACTUAL SIN

Besides, to increase the dignity of this mystery, Christ not only suffered for sinners, but the very authors and ministers of all the torments He endured were sinners. Of this the apostle reminds us in these words addressed to the Hebrews: "Think diligently upon him that endured such opposition from sinners against himself; that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds."[3] In this guilt are involved all those who fall frequently

[1] Matt. xxvii. 51; Luke xxiii. 44, 45. [2] 1 Peter ii. 5.
[3] Heb. xii. 3.

into sin; for, as our sins consigned Christ our Lord to the death of the cross, most certainly those who wallow in sin and iniquity, as far as depends on them, crucify to themselves again the Son of God, and make a mockery of Him.[1] This our guilt takes a deeper die of enormity when contrasted with that of the Jews, who, according to the testimony of the Apostle, "if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory";[2] while we, on the contrary, professing to know Him, yet denying Him by our actions, seem in some sort to lay violent hands on Him.[3]

CHRIST DELIVERED OVER TO DEATH BY THE FATHER AND BY HIMSELF

But that Christ the Lord was also delivered over to death by the Father and by Himself, we learn from these words of Isaias: "For the wickedness of my people have I struck him."[4] And a little before, when, filled with the Spirit of God, he sees the Lord covered with stripes and wounds, the same prophet says: "All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all."[5] But of the Saviour it is written: "if he shall lay down his life for sin, he shall see a long-lived seed."[6] This the Apostle expresses in language still stronger when, on the other hand, he wishes to show us how confidently we should trust in the boundless mercy and goodness of God. "He that spared not even his own Son," says the Apostle, "but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things?"[7]

THE BITTERNESS OF CHRIST'S PASSION

The next subject of the pastor's instruction is the bitterness of the Redeemer's passion. If, however, we bear in mind that "his sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground,"[8] and this, at the sole anticipation of the torments and agony which He was about to endure, we must at once perceive that His sorrows admitted of no increase; for if — and this

[1] Heb. vi. 6.
[2] 1 Cor. ii. 8.
[3] Tit. i. 16.
[4] Isaias liii. 8.
[5] Isaias liii. 6.
[6] Isaias liii. 10.
[7] Rom. viii. 32.
[8] Luke xxii. 44.

sweat of blood proclaims it — the very idea of the impending evils was so overwhelming, what are we to suppose their actual endurance to have been?

That our Lord suffered the most excruciating torments of mind and body is but too well ascertained. In the first place, there was no part of His body that did not experience the most agonizing torture; His hands and feet were fastened with nails to the cross; His head was pierced with thorns and smitten with a reed; His face was befouled with spittle and buffeted with blows; His whole body was covered with stripes; men of all ranks and conditions were also gathered together "against the Lord, and against his Christ."[1] Jews and Gentiles were the advisers, the authors, the ministers of His passion; Judas betrayed Him;[2] Peter denied Him;[3] all the rest deserted Him;[4] and while He hangs from the instrument of His execution, are we not at a loss which to deplore, His agony or His ignominy, or both? Surely no death more shameful, none more cruel, could have been devised than that which was the ordinary punishment of guilty and atrocious malefactors only, a death the tediousness of which aggravated the protraction of its exquisite pain and excruciating torture! His agony was increased by the very constitution and frame of His body. Formed by the power of the Holy Ghost, it was more perfect and better organized than the bodies of other men can be, and was therefore endowed with a superior susceptibility of pain, and a keener sense of the torments which it endured. And as to His interior anguish of mind, that too was no doubt extreme; for those among the saints who had to endure torments and tortures were not without consolation from above, which enabled them not only to bear their violence patiently, but in many instances, to feel, in the very midst of them, filled with interior joy. "I . . . rejoice," says the Apostle, "in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for his body, which is the church";[5] and in another place, "I am filled with comfort: I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation."[6] Christ our Lord tempered with an admixture of sweetness the bitter chalice of His passion, but

[1] Ps. ii. 2. [2] Matt. xxvi. 47. [3] Mark xiv. 68, 70, 71.
[4] Matt. xxvi. 56. [5] Col. i. 24. [6] 2 Cor. vii. 4.

permitted His human nature to feel as acutely every species of torment as if He were only man, and not also God.

THE BLESSINGS OF WHICH THE PASSION IS THE PLENTEOUS SOURCE

The blessings and advantages which flow to the human race from the passion of Christ alone remain to be explained. In the first place, then, the passion of our Lord was our deliverance from sin; for, as St. John says, He "hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."[1] You "he hath quickened together with him"; says the Apostle, "forgiving you all offences: blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross."[2]

He has rescued us from the tyranny of the devil, for our Lord Himself says: "Now is the judgment of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself."[3]

He discharged the punishment due to our sins; and as no sacrifice more grateful and acceptable could have been offered to God, He reconciled us to the Father,[4] appeased His wrath, and propitiated His justice.

Finally, by atoning for our sins He opened to us heaven, which was closed by the common sin of mankind, for we have, according to these words of the Apostle, "therefore, brethren, a confidence in the entering into the holies by the blood of Christ."[5]

TYPE AND FIGURE OF THE REDEMPTION

Nor are we without a type and figure of this mystery in the Old Law. Those who were prohibited to return into their native country before the death of the high priest,[6] typified that no one, however just may have been his life, could gain admission into the celestial country until the supreme and eternal High Priest, Christ Jesus, had died, and by dying opened heaven to those who, purified by the sacraments, and gifted with faith, hope, and charity, become partakers of His passion.

[1] Rev. i. 5. [2] Col. ii. 13, 14. [3] John xii. 31, 32.
[4] 2 Cor. v. 19. [5] Heb. x. 19. [6] Num. xxxv. 25.

CHRIST PURCHASED OUR REDEMPTION

The pastor will teach that all these inestimable and divine blessings flow to us from the passion of Christ; first, because the satisfaction which Jesus Christ has in an admirable manner made to His Eternal Father for our sins is full and complete, and the price which He paid for our ransom not only equals but far exceeds the debts contracted by us. Again, the sacrifice was most acceptable to God, for when offered by his Son on the altar of the cross, it entirely appeased His wrath and indignation. This the Apostle teaches when he says: "Christ . . . hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness."[1] Of the redemption which He purchased the prince of the Apostles says: "You were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers: but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled."[2]

IN HIS PASSION HE HAS LEFT US AN EXAMPLE OF EVERY VIRTUE

Besides these inestimable blessings, we have also received another of the highest importance. In the passion alone we have the most illustrious example of the exercise of every virtue. Patience, and humility, and exalted charity, and meekness, and obedience, and unshaken firmness of soul, not only in suffering for justice' sake, but also in meeting death, are so conspicuous in the suffering Saviour, that we may truly say that on the day of His passion alone He offered, in His own person, a living exemplification of all the moral precepts inculcated during the entire time of His public ministry. This exposition of the saving passion of Christ the Lord we have given briefly. Would to God that these mysteries were always present to our minds, and that we learned to suffer, to die, and to be buried with Christ; that, cleansed from the stains of sin, and rising with Him to newness of life, we may at length, through His grace and mercy, be found worthy to be made partakers of the glory of His celestial kingdom!

[1] Eph. v. 2. [2] 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

Sermon

Thoughts on the Passion

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

The whole Christian world, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, is about to turn its eyes towards Calvary, to witness the great tragedy that there took place, — the greatest, most moving tragedy that the world has ever known. During the coming days all devout Christians will follow in spirit, scene by scene, event by event, the history of the sufferings of Jesus — that history which teaches us so much of the love of God and of the terrible malice and evil of sin. It is my intention to-day to suggest to you, with God's help, some few thoughts that may be of assistance to you in your pious meditations on this great subject; that may by God's grace help you to meditate with good results to your souls. We are about to follow Our Divine Lord through all His sufferings; watching Him, listening to His words, trying to learn to know Him, love Him, and imitate Him. Let us begin by raising our minds and hearts to God, begging the grace of the Holy Spirit that we may learn well the lessons that He would have us learn — the lesson of *faith* and *hope* in the great salvation purchased for us at so dear a price; the lesson of *love* for that God "who spared not his only begotten Son," and for Him who "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Let us pray to know something of the infinite depth of divine love for men; something of the horrible evil of sin which required so great an atonement. Throughout our meditation on the Passion, dear brethren, we may with profit keep three thoughts constantly before our minds:

First — Who it is that suffers.

Second — Why He had to suffer.

Third — What it was that moved Him thus freely and willingly to suffer.

First, then, who is it that suffers? We are going to watch Him through the events of that last week of His earthly life — Holy Week. We shall see His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday; meek and riding upon an ass. We shall watch Him and listen to Him giving His last lessons in the temple, on the Mon-

day, Tuesday, and Wednesday. We shall gaze upon Him in spirit at the Last Supper, and shall see Him giving His sacred Body and Blood to the apostles under the outward form of Bread and Wine. We shall watch Him bowed down in agony, pale, trembling, sweating blood in the Garden of Gethsemane. We shall see Him basely betrayed by one of His chosen apostles, sold to His enemies for a paltry sum, brought before unjust judges; condemned, scourged, insulted, and cruelly ill treated by the soldiers, mocked, crowned with thorns, spat upon. We shall follow Him along the Way of the Cross, till at last we shall see Him nailed fast to the shameful tree, where He will hang for three long hours of agony; and finally we shall hear His last cry and see Him draw His last breath.

And who is He that goes through all this? To the crowds who surround Him He is but a man; a wonderful man, indeed, but only a man. A man, too, whose life has turned out a failure, in spite of the wonderful deeds He has done, in spite of the devotion which He has aroused in the hearts of His followers. A failure — ending in a criminal's death. And if we had been there, we should have seen in Him the form and features of a man only. But who in very truth is He who suffers?

He is the eternal, mighty God, the Maker and Lord of heaven and earth; the Word and Son of the Father, proceeding from Him from all eternity.

Faith pierces the veil of flesh beneath which God our Lord hid Himself; and in Him we see God made Man; a divine Person, the eternal Word, having two natures, a human nature which He took from the Blessed Virgin His mother, a divine nature which He had from all eternity. He is at once God and Man, truly God and truly Man; but only One Person — Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh.

And what is the result of this mysterious joining together of the divine and human natures in One Person — what is the result especially in regard to His sufferings? The result is that all He did, all He said, and in His Passion all He suffered, and His very death itself, were the words and deeds, the suffering and death of our God, in a human nature assumed by Him as His instrument in all He did for us.

You know that I, who speak to you, have a human nature. Now, when I am speaking to you, you do not say that it is my *nature* speaking; you say that I, the person, speak to you. So, when our blessed Lord did anything in His human nature, it was not merely His human nature doing it — it was done by the Person to whom that nature belonged; and that person is God. And it is this fact, the fact that the human nature of Our Lord was the instrument of His divine personality, that gives to His Passion its infinite value in the sight of God.

So, then, when in our meditations on the Passion we ask ourselves "Who did this?" the answer is: "My Lord and God; my Maker, the Lord of all things."

Dear brethren, when we really give ourselves to reflection on this truth, how stupendous it seems! Think of the indignities which Our Lord suffered; think of the scourging; think of that sacred face all filthy with the vile spittle of the soldiers; and then say to yourself — this is *my God* who is thus stripped and scourged till He is covered with blood: that face, all defiled as it is, is the face of my God. He who stands there and permits Himself to be mocked and insulted is God. He could call a legion of angels to destroy His enemies — nay, with one breath of His divine anger He could blast them to destruction. Indeed, had not He Himself proved by His works, and above all by the crowning miracle of His Resurrection, that He is God; were it not for faith, with all the abundant securities which God has given us, not only in the Holy Scriptures, but in the continued and continuous energizing of the divine power of Jesus in the history of His true Church, we could hardly have conceived the possibility that this was God who suffered thus.

But we will go on to the second thought that we should keep in mind as we meditate upon the Passion of Our Lord. Why had He to suffer?

Dear brethren, you know why. What says the Creed that we sing every Sunday in the Mass? "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; was crucified also for us; suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried."

For us men and for our salvation. Why do we need salvation? Because we have sinned; because by sin we have lost God and heaven, and deserved hell. Look at the crucifix and say to yourself, "Were it not for that I could never be saved." Look again and say, "Were it not for sin that need never have taken place." What must sin be, dear brethren? We often hear in sermons and read in pious books of the awful malice of sin — how it offends the goodness of God; how it deserves hell; how it cuts us off from God, our only good; but there is something that more vividly and more effectually than anything else will bring home to us the fearful evil of sin — and that is the crucifix. What does it come to? It comes to this — that sin, wilful, mortal sin, in such a hideous evil in God's sight that He would not forgive it till a terrible price had been paid. And what was that price? "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son"; and that Son so loved us that He did not refuse to come and pay the price. Yes, before God's eternal necessary justice could forgive, before that terrible evil of sin could be done away, God the Father sent His beloved Son, whom from all eternity He loved with all the infinite strength of love divine; sent Him in human form to earth, and laid on Him the iniquities of us all. And then He punished that Son, the all holy innocent one. He poured out upon the Son of His love the heavy, bitter punishments of that most just anger which WE deserved. Oh, what must sin be if it made God thus punish His well-loved Son? Oh, what must sin be that did to death the Lord of life? Oh, what must sin be that so cruelly treated the most Holy One, the most compassionate and loving Jesus, who all His life went about doing good?

And, dear brethren, there is something else that we must never forget. That bitter suffering and death was for ME and for YOU, for each one of us singly. Every one of us can look at Jesus in His sufferings and truthfully say, "He is doing this for ME; because of MY sins. My sins drew from Him that agonizing sweat of blood; my sins mocked and scourged Him: I, wretched sinner that I am — I nailed Him to the Cross and slew Him there." You know, dear brethren, that when Our Lord comes to us in Holy Communion, He is not divided among the many

who receive Him. Each one of us receives Him whole and entire; many together do not receive more than one. Similarly in His Passion — it is all for each one. St. Paul teaches us this in the words of my text. "He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me." Thus, then, when we ask the question, "Why had He to suffer this?" the answer is not merely "Because of sin," but "Because of *my sins*."

For me; to atone for my sins; to obtain forgiveness from God for my most wretched sins. If ever in our lives we have sinned, we must look at the crucifix and say, That is *my* work; that is *my* doing; and even if we had never committed actual sin, we should still have to say — That was for me, to draw me out of the state of original sin in which I was born, to win for me that sanctifying grace of Baptism without which I could never have been saved.

Yes; it is all for me; to save me from hell; for me, to teach me what a shocking and dreadful thing is a mortal sin; for me, to teach me to do penance for my past sins and to strive earnestly to avoid sin in the future; for me, to give me great hope and courage, when I remember that He has so abundantly redeemed me, and that all His Passion is added to my poor, weak prayers and efforts; for me, to make me love Him and thank Him; for me, to teach me the worth of my soul which He has bought and redeemed from the devil at so great a price.[1]

And now, dear brethren, let me go on to the third thought that we must have in mind as we follow Our Lord along the way of suffering. What motive had He? What made Him willing to endure all this for our salvation? What was it that could move the God of heaven and earth to "empty himself"; to "take upon him the form of a servant"; to walk this earth in human flesh; to lead a poor, humble, despised life; freely to give Himself up into the hands of His enemies that they might work their wicked will upon Him? What made Him willing to die that shameful death; the death of an outcast criminal; a death no Roman citizen was allowed to suffer? Was it the goodness, the

[1] This passage is taken from F. Galwey's *Watches of the Passion*, to which book I have also to acknowledge indebtedness in the preparation of this sermon in general.

excellence of those whom He came to save? No, for they were a sinful race. Was it that they were his friends? No, for when we were His enemies He came to redeem us. What then was it? The answer is in one word, LOVE, — DIVINE LOVE; PITYING LOVE; love of *us;* love of *you;* love of *me.*

Dear brethren, a modern spiritual writer has most truly and most wisely said that the day a man truly grasps this great truth of faith — that Jesus so loved me that He came to die for me, — is a blessed day in that man's life. "He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."

And, blessed truth, He loves me still; He loves me now; as much and as well as ever, even as He did when He knelt in an agony of prayer for me, or hung for me upon the Cross. Let us not forget this. He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever" (Heb. xiii. 8). He never changes. He is ever and always the same dear friend; the best and dearest friend of all. "I have loved you," He says, "with an everlasting love." And He shows this present love in many ways; in ways that are the blessed results of His Passion. All that He does for us in His holy Church shows it. One by one He takes each single soul, and by the holy Sacraments and other means of grace provides for individual salvation and applies to each and every one the fruit of His sacred Passion. And now, dear brethren, is it not a wonderful thing, a strange thing, that believing all this, believing that Jesus Christ, who suffered, is Our God; believing that He suffered for our sins, for your sins and for mine; believing that it was His pitying love for you and me that led Him to the Cross; and that He loves us still as much as ever He did — is it not, I say, a marvelous and strange thing that we are still so cold towards Him, yes, and still so sinful? And it is because we love Him so little that we give way to temptation and sin against Him. How is it, then, that we are so cold, so ungrateful, so unloving, and therefore so sinful? Dear brethren, it is because we do not think enough about these things, about our dear Lord and His sacred Passion. Who are the great heroes of Jesus Christ; those saints filled with an energy of divine love that has made imperishable marks upon the world's history; men like Francis; women like Teresa? They are the ones whose con-

tinual study was the Cross of Christ. To-day, perhaps, after meditating upon the Passion, we too feel divine love burning in our heart; but to-morrow, unless we renew these thoughts we shall forget, the flame of love will die down again. In a few days, perhaps, when some strong, attractive temptation comes, we shall perhaps give way, with never a thought of Jesus and His sufferings, and the smouldering spark of love that still remains will be extinguished by mortal sin. Why? It is because we so SELDOM think of Jesus and of all He has done for us that these things take no lasting hold upon our hearts. If we thought of these things oftener, if we often read and prayed and pondered over the love and Passion and death of our dear Lord, our minds would become taken up with Him; we should be more like the saints; and when temptation came the thought of Jesus crucified for love of us would stay us from sinning.

Beg of Him that during this holy Passion-tide the grateful and compassionate remembrance of His love, His Passion, and His death may enter deeply into our souls, so that we may learn to give Him that for which, with outstretched arms, He pleads upon His Cross, — the true love of our inmost hearts.

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Cath. Encyc., Vol. XI, pp. 530 535 ff.; *Summa Theol.,* III, qq. 46–49. Compare also references for Quinquagesima Sunday; Pohle-Preuss, *Soteriology;* Vaughan, *The Divine Armory,* etc., pp. 64, 105 ff., 125; Callan, *Illustrations for Sermons,* etc., pp. 22 ff.; Bellord, *Meditations,* etc., Vol. I, p. 304; Poelzl-Martindale, *The Passion and Glory of Christ.*

PALM SUNDAY

SUBJECT

THE DEATH OF OUR LORD

TEXT

He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him. — PHILIP. ii. 8, 9.

And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. — MATT. xxvii. 50.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. This is the beginning of Holy Week. It was on this day that our Lord entered Jerusalem in triumph, saluted by the cheers and hosannas of the people who six days later were clamoring for His death. The week terminates with the sorrowful scenes of Good Friday and Holy Saturday, as described in to-day's Gospel. After our Lord's death His body was deposited in the tomb and His soul descended into Limbo. It is on these articles of the Creed that we shall speak to-day.

I. He died. 1. The death of our Lord is mentioned in the Creed that we may know He really died. 2. His soul was separated from his body, but the Divinity remained united to both His soul and body. 3. Christ's death was voluntary.

II. He was buried. 1. The burial of our Lord is made a distinct part of the Creed in order that His death may be the more certain, and His resurrection the more authentic and glorious. 2. As the prophets had foretold, and as the Evangelists narrate, the Saviour's burial was in keeping with the honor and respect due Him; His body suffered no corruption. 3. Although it was a Divine Person that suffered, died, and was buried for us, our Lord's divine nature remained at all times impassible and immortal; it was His human nature that suffered.

III. He descended into hell. 1. It was the soul of Christ, and not His body, that descended into hell; His descent was real, and not merely virtual. 2. Christ descended not into the hell of the damned, but into Limbo, the peaceful repose of the just, to liberate the souls that were detained captive there, and to proclaim His power and authority.

Conclusion. We must learn to die to sin as Christ died to this world, so that at our death we may escape the eternal prison and be conducted by Christ to everlasting rest.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article IV of the Creed

CHRIST REALLY DIED

Dead and buried. When explaining these words, the pastor will propose to the belief of the faithful that Jesus Christ, after His crucifixion, was really dead and buried. It is not without just reason that this is proposed as a separate and distinct object of belief; there were some who denied His death upon the cross. The apostles, therefore, were justly of opinion that to such an error should be opposed the doctrine of faith contained in this Article of the Creed, the truth of which is placed beyond the possibility of doubt by the concurring testimony of all the Evangelists, who record that Jesus "yielded up the ghost."[1] Moreover, as Christ was true and perfect man, He of course was capable of dying, and death takes place by a separation of the soul from the body. When, therefore, we say that Jesus died, we mean that His soul was disunited from His body, not that His divinity was so separated.

HIS DIVINITY UNITED TO HIS SOUL AND BODY, WHILE SEPARATED BY DEATH

On the contrary, we firmly believe and profess that when His soul was dissociated from His body, His divinity continued always united, both to His body in the sepulchre and to His soul

[1] Matt. xxvii. 50; Mark xv. 37; Luke xxiii. 46; John xix. 30.

in Limbo. It became the Son of God to die, "that through death, he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil: and might deliver them, who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to servitude."[1]

HIS DEATH WAS VOLUNTARY

It was the peculiar privilege of the Redeemer to have died when He Himself decreed to die, and to have died not so much by external violence as by internal assent. Not only His death, but also its time and place, were ordained by Him. Thus Isaias wrote: "He was offered because it was his own will."[2] The Redeemer, before His passion, declared the same of Himself. "I lay down my life," said He, "that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me: but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it again."[3] As to the time and place of His death, He said, when Herod insidiously sought His life: "Go, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am consummated. Nevertheless I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the day following, because it cannot be that a prophet perish, out of Jerusalem."[4] He therefore offered Himself not involuntarily or by external coaction, but of His own free will. Going to meet His enemies He said, "I am he";[5] and all the punishments which injustice and cruelty inflicted on Him He endured voluntarily.

A STRONG CLAIM TO OUR GRATITUDE AND LOVE

When we meditate on the sufferings and torments of the Redeemer, nothing is better calculated to excite in our souls sentiments of lively gratitude and love than to reflect that He endured them voluntarily. Were any one to endure by compulsion every species of suffering for our sake, we should deem his claims to our gratitude very doubtful; but were he to endure death freely, and for our sake only, having had it in his power to avoid it, this indeed is a favor so overwhelming as to deprive even the most grateful heart, not only of the power of returning

[1] Heb. ii. 10, 14, 15. [2] Isaias liii. 7. [3] John x. 17, 18.
[4] Luke xiii. 32, 33. [5] John xviii. 5.

due thanks, but even of adequately feeling the extent of the obligation. We may hence form an idea of the transcendent and intense love of Jesus Christ towards us, and of His divine and boundless claims to our gratitude.

WHY THE WORD "BURIED" IS MENTIONED IN THIS ARTICLE

If, when we confess that He was buried, we make this, as it were, a distinct part of the Article, it is not because it presents any difficulty which is not implied in what we have said of His death; for believing, as we do, that Christ died, we can also easily believe that He was buried. The word "buried" was added in the creed, first, that His death may be rendered more certain, for the strongest proof of a person's death is the interment of his body; and, secondly, to render the miracle of His resurrection more authentic and illustrious. It is not, however, our belief that the body of Christ was alone interred. These words propose, as the principal object of our belief, that *God was buried;* as, according to the rule of Catholic faith, we also say with the strictest truth, that *God* was born of a virgin, that *God* died; for, as the divinity was never separated from His body which was laid in the sepulchre, we truly confess that *God was buried.*

THE BODY OF CHRIST INCORRUPT IN THE SEPULCHRE

As to the place and manner of his burial, what the Evangelists record on these subjects will be found sufficient for all the purposes of the pastor's instructions.[1] There are, however, two things which demand particular attention; the one, that the body of Christ was, in no degree, corrupted in the sepulchre, according to the prediction of the Prophet: "Thou wilt not . . . give thy holy one to see corruption;[2] the other, and it regards the several parts of this Article, that burial, passion, and also death, apply to Jesus Christ not as God but as man. To suffer and die are incidental to human nature only, although they are also attributed to God, because predicated with propriety of that *person* who is at once perfect God and perfect man.

[1] Matt. xxvii. 60; Mark xv. 46; Luke xxiii. 53; John xix. 38.
[2] Ps. xv. 10; Acts ii. 31.

Article V of the Creed

He descended into hell, the third day he arose again from the dead.

A knowledge of this article is most important

He descended into hell. To know the glory of the sepulture of our Lord Jesus Christ, of which we have last treated, is highly important; but of still higher importance is it to the faithful to know the splendid triumphs which He obtained by having subdued the devil and despoiled the powers of hell. Of these triumphs, and also of His resurrection, we are now about to speak; and although the latter presents to us a subject which might with propriety be treated under a separate and distinct head, yet, following the example of the holy Fathers, we have deemed it judicious to embody it with His descent into hell.

What its first part proposes to our belief

In the first part of this Article, then, we profess that immediately after the death of Christ His soul descended into hell, and dwelt there while His body remained in the grave; and also that the same *Person* of Christ was at the same time in hell and in the sepulchre. Nor should this excite our surprise; for we have already frequently said, that although His soul was separated from His body, His divinity was never separated from His soul or body.

Meaning of the word "hell" in this article

But as the pastor, by explaining the meaning of the word "hell" in this place may throw considerable light on the exposition of this Article, it is to be observed that by the word "hell" is not here meant the sepulchre, as some have not less impiously than ignorantly imagined; for in the preceding Article we learned that Christ was buried, and there was no reason why the Apostles, in delivering an article of faith, should repeat the same thing in other and more obscure terms. Hell, then, here signifies those secret abodes in which are detained the souls that have not been admitted to the regions of bliss, — a sense in which the word is frequently used in Scripture. Thus the Apostle says, that, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of

those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth";[1] and in the Acts of the Apostles Peter says, that Christ the Lord is again risen, "having loosed the sorrows of hell."[2]

ITS DIFFERENT MEANINGS

These abodes are not all of the same nature, for among them is that most loathsome and dark prison in which the souls of the damned are buried with the unclean spirits in eternal and inextinguishable fire. This dread abode is called Gehenna, the bottomless pit, and is hell strictly so called.

Among them is also the fire of purgatory, in which the souls of just men are cleansed by a temporary punishment, in order to be admitted into their eternal country, into which nothing defiled entereth.[3] The truth of this doctrine, founded, as holy councils declare,[4] on Scripture, and confirmed by apostolical tradition, demands exposition, all the more diligent and frequent, because we live in times when men endure not sound doctrine.

Lastly, the third kind of abode is that into which the souls of the just, who died before Christ, were received, and where, without experiencing any sort of pain and supported by the blessed hope of redemption, they enjoyed peaceful repose. To liberate these souls, who, in the bosom of Abraham were expecting the Saviour, Christ the Lord descended into hell.

THE SOUL OF CHRIST REALLY DESCENDED INTO HELL

But we are not to imagine that His power and virtue only, but we are firmly to believe that His soul also, really and substantially, descended into hell, according to this conclusive testimony of David: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell."[5] But although Christ descended into hell, His supreme power was still the same; nor was the splendor of His sanctity in any degree obscured. His descent served rather to prove that whatever has been already said of His sanctity was true; and that, as He had previously demonstrated by so many miracles, He was truly the Son of God.

[1] Philip. ii. 10. [2] Acts ii. 24. [3] Apoc. xxi. 27.
[4] C. of Trent, sess. 25. [5] Ps. xv. 10.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIS DESCENT AND THAT OF OTHERS

This we shall easily understand by comparing the descent of Christ, in its causes and circumstances, with that of the just. They descended as captives;[1] He as free and victorious among the dead, to subdue those demons by whom, in consequence of primeval guilt, they were held in captivity. They descended, some to endure the most acute torments, others, though exempt from actual pain, yet deprived of the vision of God, and of the glory for which they sighed, and consigned to the torture of suspense; Christ the Lord descended, not to suffer, but to liberate from suffering the holy and the just who were held in painful captivity, and to impart to them the fruit of His passion. His supreme dignity and power, therefore, suffered no diminution by his descent into hell.

WHY HE DESCENDED INTO HELL

Having explained these things, the pastor will next proceed to teach that the Son of God descended into hell, that, clothed with the spoils of the arch-enemy, He might conduct into heaven those holy fathers, and the other just souls, whose liberation from prison He had already purchased. This He accomplished in an admirable and glorious manner, for His august presence at once shed a celestial lustre upon the captives, filled them with inconceivable joy, and imparted to them that supreme happiness which consists in the vision of God, thus verifying His promise to the thief on the cross: "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise."[2] This deliverance of the just was long before predicted by Osee in these words: "O death, I will be thy death; O hell, I will be thy bite";[3] and also by the prophet Zachary: "Thou also by the blood of thy testament hast sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water";[4] and lastly, the same is expressed by the Apostle in these words: "Despoiling the principalities and powers, he hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in himself."[5]

However, to comprehend still more clearly the efficacy of this mystery we should frequently call to mind that not only those

[1] Ps. lxxxvii. 5, 6. [2] Luke xxiii. 43. [3] Osee xiii. 14.
[4] Zach. ix. 11. [5] Col. ii. 15.

who were born after the coming of the Saviour, but also those who preceded that event from the days of Adam, or shall succeed it to the consummation of time, are included in the redemption purchased by the death of Christ. Before His death and resurrection, heaven was closed against every child of Adam; the souls of the just, on their departure from this life, were borne to the bosom of Abraham; or, as is still the case with those who require to be freed from the stains of sin, or die indebted to the divine justice, were purified in the fire of purgatory.

Another reason also why Christ descended into hell is, that there, as well as in heaven and on earth, He might proclaim His power and authority; and that "every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth."[1] And here, who is not filled with admiration and astonishment when he contemplates the infinite love of God for man! Not satisfied with having undergone for our sake a most cruel death, He penetrates the inmost recesses of the earth to transport into bliss the souls whom He so dearly loved, and whose liberation from prison He had achieved at the price of His blood!

Sermon

The Crucifixion

BY THE REV. M. S. SMITH

"They crucified him." "Behold," says Father Galwey, in that admirable work *The Watches of the Passion*, "the few and simple words with which the Inspired Chronicler records this, the most awful yet most sublime and loving tragedy the world has ever witnessed." Only a few words, continues this zealous writer, but, like that other short sentence, "Pilate took Jesus and scourged him," what depths of meaning contained therein, and what an excess of cruelty and torture expressed!

A tragedy it is indeed, not only of earth but of Heaven, not only affecting time but eternity: for, as its fruits are to be gained in time, its consequences shall be recognized through all eternity. It was, as we have seen in our former meditations, conceived in envy, begotten of hatred, and carried out in the most barbarous

[1] Phil. ii. 10.

way. Withal, it was a tragedy most loving and merciful, for it manifested the loving mercy of God for man, the Creator for the creature, — aye, for the creature who has not only disobeyed the commands of his Creator, but has trampled upon His precepts, laughed to scorn His counsels, and defied His most solemn threats. It is also most sublime, for here we see not only God suffering death at the hands of man, but dying for the sake of those whose hearts are inflamed with hatred towards Him and whose hands are reddened in His blood.

Scarcely will you find a man willing to give up his life for a just man, says the Holy Ghost, but here we see the God-man laying down His life, laying it down willingly, — "with desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer," — not only for the just, but, mercy of mercy, for sinners.

We might ask, How could Jesus of Nazareth endure the tortures that thus far have been inflicted upon Him? Simply because His Divinity aided His humanity. In saying this we do not intimate that the Divine Nature made the suffering less hard to bear, rather that it made the human nature able the more to suffer. By right He should long since have died. "My soul," He said, "is sorrowful even unto death." Yet the Divinity, without in any way mitigating the suffering, sustains the humanity. Hence, though suffering only in His human nature, we truly say: God suffered, God died for man.

The place to which they led Him is of historic interest. It was here, according to tradition, that the skull of Adam, given by Noe to one of his sons, was interred, hence the name Golgotha, which, being interpreted, means Skull. Where then rests all that on earth remains of the first Adam, who by his sin brought misery into the world, there shall the second Adam, by His atonement, blot out that sin, and by the abundant graces here merited change that misery into blessings and again reconcile man with his God.

It was not, however, on account of this tradition that the place was chosen, but rather to add odium to His death, for here common criminals were executed, and, wishing to brand Him as such, the cry is "On to Golgotha." How the malicious designs of man are frustrated! Golgotha, or Calvary, from being a term of re-

proach, has become synonymous with all that is grand and glorious, is of infinite mercy and boundless love. In itself so insignificant as scarcely to merit the name of hill on the map of the world, it is now known as Mount Calvary, and its very name gives hope to the soul laden with sin, while to the just it brings increase of joy and consolation; for the graces there merited give to man a right to Heaven, a right none may gainsay, much less deny.

The first journey to Calvary was made with difficulty and in torture, in deep humiliation and in sorrow; now, that the way has been marked, traced by the blood of the Victim, we can make the way in peace, springing from the blessings of hope. Three times He fell on the way, and it would seem at times that worn-out nature would protest and the hill of Calvary never would be reached.

Now, however, that the journey has ended, will they bring about His death quickly and, as far as may be, painlessly? Even into the valley of the shadow will hatred follow Him. "They crucified him," says the narrative, and it is left to man to dwell on this mere statement and from it draw some idea of the pain and, above all, the humiliation of the death.

They offer Him wine mixed with gall. To the condemned wine was given to fortify them, and thus enable them the better to endure the pain about to be inflicted. Behold how even this act of mercy was charged with malice. According to custom, the wine is tendered but mixed with gall; and the Scripture says: "He would not drink," not, say the Commentators, on account of the bitterness, but because He would not alleviate His sufferings even by the merest drop of wine. Stripping Him of His garments they place Him on the hard bed of the cross and fasten Him to it with nails driven through His Hands and Feet. The soldier places the nail in the palm of the right Hand and with heavy hammer drives it through the flesh into the wood of the cross. No bone is broken, for it was said: "of him a bone you shall not break"; but the sinews are torn as through the Hand the nail finds its way. That Hand which with the Father united in the creation of the world; that Hand which during His sojourn on earth was raised so often to call down blessings on

man; behold it now extended, and for what? That it may be grasped in thankfulness and in gratitude for the many times it was raised to call down favors on man? No; but to receive the cruel nail.

The right Hand fastened, they come to the left and then to the Feet, and now His enemies feel a certain amount of satisfaction, for they see Him on His bed of death and from it He cannot rise as He is fastened with nails.

How many nails were used in fastening Jesus to the Cross? This question has never been definitely settled. Some contend that four were used, one to each Hand and two to the Feet, while others maintain that He was fastened to the cross with but three nails. Tradition, as manifested in the crucifix in the general usage sanctioned by the Church, favors the latter opinion. The question, however, is of little moment; all we need know is: that, nailed to the cross, our Jesus in love expiated our sins and reconciled us with the offended Father.

They drag the cross to the place prepared for it, and with much jeering and with shouts of exultation it is lifted up and, with a rude shock, falls into the hole made for it. The shock almost tears His Hands and Feet from the fastening nails, and would have done so had they not taken the precaution of securing Him with cords and ropes, which, though preventing the Body from falling from the cross, in no way mitigated the pain caused by the nails. The shock draws a moan of anguish from the Sufferer that finds a responsive sigh in the heart of the sorrowful mother. Now the cross stands erect and around it circle the priests and rulers. At first sight of the Victim thus tortured they stand aghast; the suffering seems too terrible even for their hatred towards Him. Then one, more callous than the rest, cries out: "Behold Him now; look upon the man who dared denounce your priests: He spoke of us as whitened sepulchres, as blind leaders of the blind, for us He had no words but words of censure. Gaze upon Him now and ask: who is the false teacher, who the seducer of the people?" "Oh, yes," they say, "He is a king; behold His crown," for they had placed the crown of thorns on His head. "Gaze upon His throne; it stands on high that all may see it, all view the king. No danger of Him

losing His throne; for, behold, we have fastened Him to it with nails."

Even the most degraded and depraved are softened at the approach of death, and it is only the most savage that will not do all in his power to assuage the agony of the dying. How act the persecutors of Jesus? The people stood beholding and the Rulers with them deride Him, saying: "He saved others; let him save himself." And mocking they say: "If he be king of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him." Boldly they pass and repass in front of Him, challenging Him, and calling on Him now to prove that He is the Son of God. "Come down from the cross," they say, "and we will believe you." Proof after proof have they had of His wonderful power. "He hath done all things well," had been the verdict of those who had witnessed His works. Again and again the people said: "His words, like His works, are evidently from God, for no man ever spoke as He speaks." Hearing the people thus speak of Him, the Priests were filled with envy. Will they then believe in Him if He should give the proof they now ask if He come down from the cross? Well does He know the perversity of their hearts, and fully does He understand that even if He should give this last proof they would still repudiate Him. What an insult in being compelled to hear them thus boasting. "Do you hear, O Jesus of Nazareth — do you mark our words, O Galilean; come down from the cross and we will believe in you; nay, we will lead all the people to you, and in you shall all Judea believe. Where is now your boasted power; you, who said 'destroy this temple and in three days I will build it'? You a miracle worker? yes, a miracle worker among the ignorant. Now satisfy us, the Rulers; satisfy us by a miracle, by one that shall redound to your own benefit; come down from the cross and we, priests and leaders of Israel, will become your disciples, and your followers shall be limited only by the confines of Israel, for we will compel all to acknowledge You." "Vah," they say, "He said He was greater than Abraham, more powerful than Moses, and proclaimed Himself more than a prophet. Let Him give evidence of that power, give proof of that greatness, and we will believe Him."

Truly was there blasphemy in the very shadow of the cross. "They that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads." "He spoke of His trust in God; let God now deliver Him and we will believe," they cry out. To the taunts of the priests are added the insults of the soldiers, who, in derision, say: "If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself." No taunt more stinging than that which glories in failure, either real or fancied; and how they rejoice in the apparent failure of this Man, how sarcastically they remind Him of the power of which He seemed to boast, and of His present helplessness!

Behold, in the midst of their exultation the priests receive a humiliation. Pilate has ordered that the cause of His death be proclaimed; has ordered that an inscription be placed above Him on the cross. In Latin, Greek, and Hebrew it is written, the three principal languages of the time. And what do they read? "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." "No, no," say the Rulers, "not this; write that he said he was King of the Jews." "What I have written, I have written." In other words, "It shall remain as inscribed," curtly answers the Governor, and thus they are compelled to acknowledge that they have crucified their King. "We will have no King but Caesar," they cried out in the Praetorium, and now, on Calvary, they must perforce acknowledge Him as a lineal descendant of the Royal House of David. While protesting against this and while circulating about the cross, belching forth insults and blasphemies, the priests are amazed on hearing His voice on the cross.

Have you ever reflected on the silence of Jesus during the time of His suffering? From the Hall of Judgment until He reaches Calvary He speaks only to the weeping women He met on the way. In all His tortures He asks neither for surcease of suffering nor appeals for sympathy, and His words to the weeping women are more in the nature of an encouragement to them than a begging of consolation for self. At last He breaks the silence, and what is the purport of His words? Will He now sue for clemency? "Hearken," say the bystanders, "He speaks"; and they hear the voice of the Son of Man appealing to the Eternal Father and asking what? — that He would visit upon His persecutors the vengeance their crime merits? No. Can it be pos-

sible? "Father! forgive them, they know not what they do," the sweet voice of the dying Jesus on the cross floats down the hill of Calvary, and those within hearing are filled with astonishment. Will not this supreme act of clemency, this unheard-of voice of charity, have some effect on His prosecutors? Even one dying with Him is not moved, but in blasphemous derision says: "If thou be the Son of God, if thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." The other reviles not, but rebukes his companion by saying: "We die justly, this man unjustly." He turns to Jesus and adds: "Lord, remember me when thou shalt enter into thy kingdom." And oh, the reward for this act of sympathy! "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Seven words, that is, seven times according to spiritual writers, He spoke from the cross. Without trying to follow these words in sequence, we shall briefly consider them as found in the Gospels.

Looking down from the cross, He sees His sorrowing Mother and the beloved disciple. To the Mother He says: "Woman, behold thy son," and to the disciple: "Son, behold thy mother." At that moment, as we saw in our last meditation, He infused into her heart a mother's love for each and every child of earth, a love more tender than earthly mother could have for earthly child. Think you she will ever forget this which may be termed the last Will and Testament of her dying Son? A dark cloud now envelops Calvary, and filled with fear the priests and many of the people, singly and in groups, leave the hallowed spot.

From out the darkness the voice of the dying Lord is heard: "Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani," which being interpreted is: "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Many interpretations are given of these words, which, the Scripture says, were uttered in a loud voice. Knowing as we do that by the Incarnation the two natures, divine and human, of our Lord are hypostatically united, and that not even by death can the humanity be separated from the divinity, we can only listen to these words and admire them. According to some commentators He speaks merely as man, and as man suffered this abandonment: even as we heard Him last night in the garden cry out: "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass by; yet not my will but Thine be done." In what did the abandonment consist? In the fact

that He not only, at that moment, though innocence itself, felt the weight of the sins of the world, and as one bearing these sins experienced the torments of the damned; but in a manner no tongue may explain the divinity allowed the humanity to undergo the pain of loss that comes to the soul when it hears those awful words: "Depart from me, ye accursed," etc. Whatever the import of the words, we know they were wrenched from a soul plunged into the deepest abyss of suffering. Thinking He called Elias, one standing by said: "Let us see if Elias will come to His aid," while others, some friendly, many unfriendly, awaited with bated breath the next scene in this awful drama.

Once more the voice of the Sufferer is heard, as consumed with agony He cries out, "I thirst." We wonder not that His pain-racked and fevered body was tortured with thirst. Neither food nor drink had been given Him from the time He left the Cenacle the night before, and during that time He had lost much blood and poor human nature had been worn out by the trials to which He had been subjected. This, however, was not the thirst of which He complained; rather, the thirst for souls, especially the souls of those who encompassed His death as well as of those who by that death would not profit. It was also to atone for the sins we commit in indulging our sensual appetites. One of the soldiers dips a sponge in vinegar and, placing it upon a reed, lifts it to the swollen lips of the Victim on the cross.

When Jesus had tasted the vinegar, He said, "It is consummated."

"It is consummated." The work for which I came to earth is finished, the work of the Eternal Father. The redemption of man is now effected; nothing remains to be done; hence, saying in a loud voice: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," He bows His head and gives up the ghost. "He bows his head," says a holy writer, "thus giving death permission to approach, and dies." "It is consummated." Some time before He had said to His disciples: "I have a baptism wherein I am to be baptized, and how I am constrained until it be accomplished." This is the baptism of which He spoke, and mark how it has been accomplished; baptized in His own blood, shed freely, shed willingly for the redemption of the world. Now the absolute

reign of sin is at an end and the desolation brought on earth by man's rebellion in the Garden of Eden is changed into the reign of grace by the consummation of the sacrifice which began in the Garden of Gethsemani. Not merely has justice been satisfied; not only has the debt incurred by sin been paid; not only has the reconciliation of man with God been effected, but enough has been done to draw the hearts of men to their God, and to infuse into those hearts a hope and a security, a certainty of salvation that the powers of evil can never dim, much less take away from man. Crying out with a loud voice, a voice heard not only on Calvary, but heard throughout the world, heard throughout Heaven, heard even in the uttermost depths of hell, He bows His head and gives up the Spirit. A cry, says another holy writer, of pain and a cry of joy. Of pain, because of death; for though on account of the hypostatic union the Divine nature will never be separated from the human nature (death is the separation of the soul from the body), yet death did separate the Divine nature from His manhood, that is from His composite human nature — from His Body and Soul united. Hence St. Thomas says: "During the time of death He was not a man; during His days in the grave He was not God-Man." To understand this mystery, which is one of the five principal mysteries of our Holy Religion, we must remember that death is not a separation of the two natures of Christ, but is the separation of the soul from the body. On account of this hypostatic union of the two natures we, as we have seen, truly say: God died for man.

A cry of joy because victory has been gained and in that victory both Heaven and earth rejoice. "It is consummated," and the first fruit of that consummation is found in the act of faith made by the Centurion at the foot of the Cross: "Indeed this was the Son of God."

Now, behold, all nature protests against the outrage perpetrated by man on nature's God. The sun is darkened, the earth trembles, the veil of the Temple is rent in twain, and graves are opened, from which many of the saints who were at rest came out and after the Resurrection appeared to many in Jerusalem. His enemies, solicitous for the letter of the law, go to Pilate and

"that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath Day" ask permission to cause the deaths of the three crucified. They break the legs of the two; but when they come to Jesus, the Centurion (Longinus) says: "You shall not in your hatred pursue Him farther. Can you not see that He is dead? You have had your wishes to the full." To satisfy them, rather than to save the Body, He opens the side with his spear and thence comes blood and water. First blood, then water, to show that the last drop of His Blood had been shed for the redemption of man.

With Pilate's permission the body is taken down from the cross and placed in a grave, made for the burial of Joseph of Arimathea, so that, even for His last resting place on earth, the dead Jesus depends on the charity of another.

With Jesus we have now been during the time of His Passion, and having witnessed in spirit all that has been done for us for our redemption, we might ask, What shall we do to show our appreciation of this manifestation of love? What does He ask? Simply that we return love for the love that He has shown. This we do, not only by sympathizing with Him in His sufferings, but by hating, detesting, and avoiding sin; for, as we have seen, though love was the cause, sin gave the occasion for the Passion, — not merely the sins of mankind, but our sins. With feelings, then, of reciprocal love we will go to Calvary, and gazing on that bloody portrait of charity we will bewail our sins, and from hearts burning with love will say, "Mercy, my Jesus, mercy!"

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EASTER SUNDAY

SUBJECT

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

TEXT

He is risen, he is not here. — MARK xvi. 6.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. Last week we contemplated the separation of our Lord's body and soul in death; the former was laid away in the tomb, the latter descended, as we saw, into Limbo. To-day that same body and soul are reunited, and our Lord issues triumphantly from the tomb. The Gospel tells us how the holy women were on their way to anoint the body of Christ, and how, as they approached the grave, they found the great stone rolled away, the tomb empty, and an angel there to announce to them that the Lord had risen.

I. "The third day he arose again from the dead." 1. The meaning of this Article of the Creed is that after Christ's death His soul and body were reunited, He returned to life, and rose from the tomb. 2. The difference between our Lord's resurrection and that of others is, that Christ raised Himself by His own power, and that He was the first who rose to die no more. 3. Christ rose on the third day, inasmuch as He was in the tomb on Friday, Saturday, and a part of Sunday. He did not rise immediately after being buried, in order to prove His humanity; He did not defer His resurrection to the end of the world, when all will rise, in order to prove His Divinity. 4. The great importance of the resurrection is in this, that Christ foretold it as the crowning miracle of His life, and the Apostles consequently preached it as the greatest proof of the Saviour's Divinity and the truth of His teaching.

II. The reasons of Christ's resurrection. (1) He rose for His own exaltation: (2) to strengthen our faith; (3) to sustain and nourish our hope; (4) to complete the work of our redemption.

III. The blessings of Christ's resurrection. 1. His resurrection is the *cause* and *model* of our own future bodily resurrection. 2. Christ's resurrection is also the cause and model of our spiritual resurrection from sin. 3. The Resurrection of Christ is the basis and foundation of our religion (1 Cor. xv. 14), since it is the greatest of miracles and the one to which our Lord chiefly appealed in proof of His Divinity (Luke xi. 29; John ii. 19). It is also one of the best established facts of human history. The testimony of the Roman soldiers, the many apparitions of the risen Saviour, the reluctance at first of the Apostles to believe it, and their later fearlessness in declaring it to the whole world, place the Resurrection beyond all doubt, although it is now the main object of attack on the part of unbelievers.

Lessons of the resurrection. 1. The newness of life which we should learn from Christ's resurrection consists in the practice of virtue and in perseverance to the end (see to-day's Epistle). 2. The chief sign by which we may know that we have risen with Christ to this newness of life is a relish for the things that are above rather than for the things that are of earth (Col. iii. 1).

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article V of the Creed

THE SECOND PART OF THE FIFTH ARTICLE

We now come to the second part of the fifth Article, and how indefatigable should be the labors of the pastor in its exposition we learn from these words of the Apostle to Timothy: "Be mindful that the Lord Jesus Christ is risen again from the dead";[1] words no doubt addressed not only to Timothy, but to all who have care of souls.

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 8.

ITS MEANING

But the meaning of the Article is, that after Christ the Lord had expired on the cross, on Friday at the ninth hour, and was buried on the evening of the same day by His disciples, who with the permission of the governor Pilate laid the body of the Lord, taken down from the cross, in a new tomb, in a garden near at hand, His soul was reunited to His body early on the morning of the third day after His death, that is on Sunday, and thus He who was dead during those three days rose, and returned again to life, from which He had departed when dying.

RESURRECTION SUPERIOR TO THE NATURAL POWER OF MAN

By the word "resurrection," however, we are not merely to understand that Christ was raised from the dead, — a privilege common with Him to many others, — but that He rose by his own power and virtue, a singular prerogative peculiar to Him alone, — for it is incompatible with our nature, nor was it ever given to man to raise himself by his own power, from death to life. This was an exercise of power reserved for the omnipotent hand of God, as these words of the Apostle declare: "for although he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God."[1] This divine power, having never been separated, either from His body while in the grave, or from His soul while disunited from His body, existed in both, and gave to both a capability of reuniting; and thus did the Son of God, by His own power, return to life, and rise again from the dead. This David foretold when, filled with the spirit of God, he prophesied in these words: "His right hand hath wrought for him salvation, and his arm is holy."[2] This we also have from the divine lips of the Redeemer Himself: "I lay down my life," says He, "that I may take it again . . . and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again."[3] To the Jews He also said, in confirmation of His doctrine: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."[4] Although the Jews understood

[1] 2 Cor. xiii. 4.
[2] Ps. xcvii. 2.
[3] John x. 17, 18.
[4] John ii. 19.

Him to have spoken thus of the magnificent temple of Jerusalem, built of stone, yet as the Scripture testifies in the same place, "he spoke of the temple of his body."[1] We sometimes, it is true, read in Scripture that He was raised by the Father;[2] but this refers to Him as man, as those passages which say that He rose by His own power relate to Him as God.[3]

CHRIST "THE FIRST BEGOTTEN OF THE DEAD"

It is also the peculiar privilege of Christ to have been the first who enjoyed this divine prerogative of rising from the dead, for He is called in Scripture "the first begotten of the dead,"[4] and also "the firstborn from the dead."[5] The Apostle also says, "Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep: for by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead. And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But every one in his own order: the first-fruits Christ, then they that are of Christ."[6] These words of the Apostle are to be understood of a perfect resurrection, by which we are resuscitated to eternal life and are no longer subject to death. In this resurrection Christ the Lord holds the first place; for if we speak of resurrection, that is of a return to life, subject to the necessity of again dying, many were thus raised from the dead before Christ,[7] all of whom, however, were restored to life to die again. But Christ the Lord, having conquered death, rose again to die no more, according to this clear testimony of the Apostle: "Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him."[8]

CHRIST ROSE AGAIN ON THE THIRD DAY

The Third Day. In explanation of these additional words of the Article, the pastor will inform the people that Christ did not remain in the grave during the whole of these three days, but, as He lay in the sepulchre during an entire natural day, during part of the preceding day, and part of the following, He is said,

[1] John ii. 21.
[2] Acts ii. 24; iii. 15.
[3] Rom. viii. 34.
[4] Apoc. i. 5.
[5] Col. i. 18.
[6] 1 Cor. xv. 20–23.
[7] 3 Kings xvii. 22; 4 Kings iv. 34.
[8] Rom. vi. 9.

with strictest truth, to have lain in the grave for three days, and on the third day to have risen again from the dead.

WHY HE ROSE ON THE THIRD DAY

To declare his divinity, He deferred not His resurrection to the end of the world; while at the same time to prove His humanity, and the reality of His death, He rose not immediately, but on the third day after His death, a space of time sufficient to prove that He had really died.

"ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES" WHY ADDED TO THE CREED

Here the Fathers of the first Council of Constantinople added the words, "according to the Scriptures," which they received from St. Paul. These words they embodied with the creed, because the same Apostle teaches the absolute necessity of the mystery of the resurrection when he says: "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain . . . for you are yet in your sins."[1] Hence, admiring our belief of this Article, St. Augustine says: "It is of little moment to believe that Christ died: this the Pagans, Jews, and all the wicked believe; in a word, all believe that Christ died; but that He rose from the dead is the belief of Christians; to believe that He rose again, this we deem of great moment."[2] Hence it is that our Lord very frequently spoke to His disciples of His resurrection, and seldom or never of His passion without adverting to His resurrection. Thus, when He said: "The Son of man . . . shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death," He added: "and the third day he shall rise again."[3] Also when the Jews called upon Him to give an attestation of the truth of His doctrine by some miraculous sign He said: "A sign shall not be given it, [this generation] but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights: so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights."[4]

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17. [2] Aug. in Ps. cxx. 4.
[3] Luke xviii. 31, 32, 33; Matt. xvi. 21.
[4] Matt. xii. 39, 40; Luke xi. 29.

THREE THINGS WHICH ARE HERE TO BE EXPLAINED

To understand still better the force and meaning of this Article, there are three things which demand attentive consideration: first, the necessity of the resurrection; secondly, its end and object; thirdly, the blessings and advantages of which it is to us the source.

I. NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

With regard to the first, it was necessary that Christ should rise again in order to manifest the justice of God; for it was most congruous that He who through obedience to God was degraded, and loaded with ignominy, should by Him be exalted. This is a reason assigned by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Philippians. "He humbled himself," says he, "becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him."[1]

He rose also to confirm our faith, which is necessary for justification: the resurrection of Christ from the dead by His own power affords an irrefragable proof of His divinity. It also nurtures and sustains our hope, for as Christ rose again, we rest on an assured hope that we too shall rise again; the members must necessarily arrive at the condition of their head. This is the conclusion which St. Paul draws from the reasoning which he uses in his epistles to the Corinthians,[2] and the Thessalonians;[3] and Peter, the prince of the Apostle, says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy hath regenerated us unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto the inheritance incorruptible."[4]

II. ITS END AND OBJECT

Finally, the resurrection of our Lord, as the pastor will inculcate, was necessary to complete the mystery of our salvation and redemption. By His death Christ liberated us from the thraldom of sin, and restored to us, by His resurrection, the most important of those privileges which we had forfeited by sin. Hence these

[1] Philip. ii. 8, 9.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 12.
[3] 1 Thess. iv. 13.
[4] 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

words of the Apostle: "He was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification."[1] That nothing, therefore, may be wanting to perfect the work of our salvation, it was necessary that as He died, He should also rise again from the dead.

III. ITS BLESSINGS AND ADVANTAGES

From what has been said we can perceive the important advantages which the resurrection of our Lord has conferred on the faithful: in His resurrection we acknowledge Him to be the immortal God, full of glory, the conqueror of death and hell, and this we are firmly to believe and openly to profess of Christ Jesus.

Again, the resurrection of Christ effects our resurrection, not only as its efficient cause, but also as its model. Thus, with regard to the resurrection of the body we have this testimony of the Apostle: "by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead."[2] To accomplish the mystery of our redemption in all its parts, God made use of the humanity of Christ as its efficient instrument, and hence His resurrection is the efficient cause of ours. It is also the model. His resurrection was the most perfect of all, and as His body, rising to immortal glory, was changed, so shall our bodies also — before frail and mortal — be restored and clothed with glory and immortality. In the language of the Apostle, "we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of his glory."[3]

The same may be said of a soul dead in sin. How the resurrection of Christ is proposed to such a soul as the model of her resurrection we learn from the same Apostle, when he says: "Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Again a little further on: "Knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him. For in that he died to sin, he died once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto

[1] Rom. iv. 25. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 21.
[3] Phil. iii. 20, 21.

God: so do you also reckon, that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus our Lord." [1]

From the resurrection of Christ, therefore, we should derive two important lessons of instruction: the one, that after we have washed away the stains of sin we should begin to lead a new life, distinguished by integrity, innocence, holiness, modesty, justice, beneficence, and humility; the other, that we should so persevere in that newness of life as never more, with the divine assistance, to stray from the paths of virtue on which we have once entered.

Nor do the words of the Apostle prove only that the resurrection of Christ is proposed as the model of our resurrection; they also declare that it gives us power to rise again, and imparts to us strength and courage to persevere in holiness and righteousness, and in the observance of the commandments of God. As His death not only furnishes us with an example, but also supplies us with strength to die to sin, so also His resurrection invigorates us to attain righteousness, that worshipping God in piety and holiness, we may walk in the newness of life to which we have risen. For the Redeemer achieved principally by His resurrection, that we, who before died with Him to sin, and to the world, may rise also with Him again to a new discipline and manner of life.

PRINCIPAL PROOFS OF A RESURRECTION FROM SIN

The principal proofs of this resurrection from sin which demand observation are taught us by the Apostle: "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God." [2] Here he distinctly tells us that they whose desire of life, honors, riches, and repose are directed chiefly to the place in which Christ dwells, have truly risen with Him. But when he adds: "Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth," [3] he gives this, as it were, as another standard by which we may ascertain if we have truly risen with Christ. For as a relish for food indicates a healthy state of the body, so with regard to the soul, if we relish "whatever things are true, whatever modest, whatever just, whatever

[1] Rom. vi. 4, 5, 9–11. [2] Col. iii. 1. [3] Col. iii. 2.

holy,"[1] and experience within us a sense of the sweetness of heavenly things, this we may consider a very strong proof that with Christ we have risen to a new and spiritual life.

Sermons

The Resurrection of Christ

BY THE REV. THOMAS F. BURKE, C.S.P.

I. No other fact has been such a power in the world as that which we commemorate to-day, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In the annals of religion and its progress, in the records of faith and its victories, in the history of morality and its advancement, in the story of charity and its achievements, there has been no factor so influential. It is bound up most intimately and closely with human life. Even those who deny it as a myth are living to-day under conditions which would not exist had not centuries of Christian people believed in this great fact.

The Resurrection of Christ is the foundation of the Christian faith, because it is the proof supreme of His Divinity. Throughout His whole life, indeed, Christ was the revelation of God unto man. "God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world." The greatness, the beauty, the holiness, the majesty, the love, the mercy, the justice of God were manifested in the human life and actions of our Divine Lord upon earth. When an afflicted woman touched the hem of His garment and He cured her of her sickness; when the blind man cried out to Him, "Lord, that I may see," and He gave him sight; when a ruler begged that his child might not die, and Jesus infused new vigor and health; when a sister and again a mother were in grief over the loss of a loved one, and He called the dead back to life; when a thief dying on a cross sought for pardon, and Jesus washed away the guilt of sin,— in these and in many other instances He gave proof that He was divine.

[1] 1 Phil. iv. 8.

All these, however, are subordinate to the one grand, triumphal fact which is the corner-stone of Christianity, and upon which all the rest of the structure depends, — the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. So could the Apostle say: "If Christ be not risen from the dead, vain is our preaching, vain is your faith."

He who admits the Resurrection must hold to Christ's Divinity, and consequently to His divine right to be the Guide and Teacher of man. On the other hand, he who denies the Resurrection will not hesitate to sacrifice altogether belief in the divine prerogatives and the divine mission of Jesus Christ.

II. Relying upon the Gospel narrative, my dear brethren, and upon the innumerable references throughout the New Testament, we must conclude that no fact in the world's history is more incontestably established than the Resurrection of Christ; and yet we are brought face to face with the denial of this, by some at least.

The New Testament gives us evidence after evidence of the Truth. God Himself foretold His resurrection. The spirit of prophecy rested upon Him, and at times, for the sake of His followers, He lifted the veil that hangs beyond and revealed the vision, dimly it may have been, of future triumph and glory. When some would ask Him for a sign, He spoke of the sign of Jonas the prophet: "For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights: so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights" (Matt. xii. 40).

When about to go up to Jerusalem for the last time, He foretold what would happen to the Son of man: "The scribes and Pharisees . . . shall deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified, and the third day he shall rise again" (Matt. xx. 18, 19).

At the time of His glorious transfiguration, when His favored Apostles would have rushed through the world proclaiming the miracle, "he charged them not to tell any man what things they had seen, till the Son of man shall be risen again from the dead" (Mark ix. 8).

Again, "Destroy," said He, "this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But he spoke of the temple of his body" (John ii. 19, 21).

These are but examples of His declarations to the effect that His suffering would be followed by joy, His night by day, His death by victory. His words were so understood and acted upon by the rulers of the Jews. "Sir," they said to Pilate "we have remembered, that that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day: lest perhaps his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead" (Matt. xxvii. 63, 64). The Jews therefore were prepared for any trickery.

The lifeless body was placed in the tomb; a special detachment of Roman soldiers, with instructions to more than ordinary watchfulness, was placed on guard and the tomb itself was officially sealed. Despite these measures, defying the seal of Rome and its Roman guardians, Christ rose triumphantly from the dead. On the very day of His resurrection He appeared unto the repentant and the rejoicing Mary Magdalen. Then to Peter, His chosen vicar, and to John, His especially beloved. In the evening of the same day He walked with two of His followers to the town of Emmaus, and later appeared unto His assembled Apostles.

After the first day at least six separate appearances are recorded. As before His death, now after His resurrection, He conversed with His Apostles, spoke to His disciples, ate and drank with them. He brought certainty to the doubting Thomas, the sceptic apostle whose fault begot those consoling words, "Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed." Upon a mountain in Galilee, in the midst of five hundred people, beside the sacred shores of the Lake of Tiberias, He appeared and spoke the words of light before which all lingering shadows of doubt were dispelled, and the flower of hope was new-born.

In reality, my dear brethren, if there be one fact in history which is better entitled to credit than any other, I do not hesitate to say that that fact is the glorious resurrection of Jesus from the tomb. Never, no, never, within the memory of man was any transaction transmitted through every successive generation, from the period of its occurrence to the present day, amid such a blaze of evidence. It is attested by the positive and unexceptionable

testimony of persons of the highest integrity, who were themselves eyewitnesses of it, who saw Jesus dead, and who afterward beheld Him alive; who beheld Him not once or twice only, but frequently; not transiently, but for a considerable time; who not only beheld Him but who heard Him, conversed with Him, touched Him, ate and drank with Him, and had every imaginable certainty, both of the reality and identity of His person which it was possible for the evidence of the senses to convey, and who proved, moreover, their honesty and sincerity by that best of arguments, the shedding of their blood.

Had Christ not risen from the dead, there would be no Christianity. Had not Christ risen from the dead, the preaching of the Apostles would have been vain, and the people's faith would have been vain. A vain preaching and a vain faith would have failed long since. Nineteen centuries would not have passed to find that preaching and hope as strong as ever. Had it been a vain preaching, it would have been annihilated in the ten great persecutions which the power of mighty Rome concocted for its destruction. Had it been a vain preaching, it would have succumbed to the efforts of him who when dying was forced to cry out: "Galilean, Thou has conquered." Had it been a vain preaching, it would have been swept from the face of the earth in the avalanche of paganism that from the north broke through the gates of the empire. Had it been a vain preaching, the third, second, yes, the first century would have stood beside its grave.

III. Yet in the light of these evidences there are those to-day who deny the Resurrection. Upon theoretical grounds they declare its impossibility, because they hold that miracles in general are impossible. It is a question of fact more than theory. They would say: "God cannot interfere with the established laws of the Universe and the decrees of nature."

God cannot interfere? What kind of a God? An impotent abstraction of the mind? But God is more than this. He is a reality, a personality. We are free agents. Our freedom is a perfection. If there be a God, He too must be free, and this implies the right and the power to make exceptions to His own laws.

IV. We can see that loss of faith in the Resurrection has brought with it the loss of belief in Jesus Christ, God and man,

and is leading to the entire giving up of faith in God and the life to come. What is the cause of this? One cause is disbelief in the records of the Resurrection, disbelief in the Scriptural account. Now, I maintain that the only place where belief in the Scriptures is securely retained, and the only place therefore where the fact of the Resurrection is safely guarded, is within the Catholic Church. She is the bulwark of the Resurrection. She is the one living witness of the fact that Christ rose from the dead.

Look about the world to-day and you will find no body of people among whom there is the same respect, the same reverence, for the Scriptures as among the members of the Catholic Church. You will find no other church that holds with the same steadfastness to the sacredness of their character.

While among Christians outside the Catholic Church the principle of private interpretation of the Scriptures has led men to believe what they like, and has opened the way not only to difficulty but no doubt, she has stood in calm serenity and has held to her position as the teacher of men, the authoritative interpreter of Scriptures, appointed by Jesus Christ. While outside of her fold men are gradually coming to look upon the Scriptures as any other literature, she has unflinchingly declared them to be supreme over all other writings, to be the inspired truth of God. While at the best many will accord them only the credence given to human history, with its liability to prejudice and error, she proclaims them to be without error, because they are a Divine record of facts, stamped with the seal of heaven itself. While among sceptics the Scriptures are considered to be only a legendary legacy of bygone days, she, filled with the consciousness of her identity through the ages, can tell the world to-day, as she has told it through nineteen centuries, "I know that these things are true." And when, as the time goes on, amid those who have sacrificed belief in the Divine character of the Scriptures, they shall lose for them even the regard that is paid to human documents, she will stand, as heretofore, their staunchest defender.

V. Church of Christ, Thou art the one witness upon earth to-day of the Resurrection. Thou alone hast breasted the storms

of the centuries. Thou canst thus speak to the world: "Before Rationalism was, I am; before the Unitarian and the Socinian, I am; before Renan and Strauss, I am. Nations have lived and died; people have risen and fallen: ages have come and gone, I have witnessed their coming and their going. I have stood firm and unshaken amidst the storms of persecution, the assaults of infidelity, the ravages of licentiousness. I can carry the mind back to the time when the 'smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon and camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian Amphitheater.' I have witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem, the downfall of Constantinople, the conquest of Rome. I have witnessed the formation of the Christian nations of Europe; I have seen the savage civilized, the barbarian educated, the wild warrior subdued. I can link the twentieth century with the first. I have witnessed many of the events recorded in the New Testament. I am the living witness of all Christian ages, and I bear my testimony unto this day that Christ has risen."

VI. To-day, then, is the day of Christ's triumph, the day of the Church's rejoicing, that Church to which has been committed the preaching of the faith founded on His Resurrection. On the day of His death the world triumphed. Beside the cross the voice went up: "Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again: save thyself, come down from the cross." Even then a word would have brought an army of smiling angels bearing fiery swords; even then a word would have struck down His persecutors; even then, did He desire it, that scene of death and defeat could have been changed into a heavenly victory. He could, but He would not, for then He was suffering for a guilt that was not His own. On the morn of the Resurrection another voice spoke. When the holy woman arrived at the tomb, an angel clothed in white stood before them and cried out, "He is risen, he is not here."

"Vah, . . . save thyself, come down from the cross."

And the triumphant answer rolls on through the centuries: "He is risen, he is not here."

Through the world it echoes: "He is risen, as he said." It is the foundation of Christianity. The Apostles preached it and they knew whereof they spoke.

He is risen! It is confusion to the deniers of Christ's Divinity, for, well founded as it is, it cannot be reasonably denied.

He is risen! It is the tocsin of Faith, inspiring that belief without which there is no salvation.

He is risen! It is the promise and the hope of our resurrection upon the last day.

As we take a broad general view of the centuries, we seem to be standing in the nave of some vast cathedral. Over the distant altar we can see the inscription, "He is risen, as he said." From within this cathedral there issues forth the Christian song of triumph. Within its confines are gathered the hosts of witnesses from all times. We hear again the Evangelists chanting solemnly the simple story of Easter morn. We hear the whole body of the Apostles taking up the refrain and sounding it into all their followers. We hear St. Paul reiterating the sacred words and proclaiming that there is no Christianity without faith in the Resurrection. We hear the witnesses of the first centuries, the martyrs, clothed in blood-red garments, telling how with their life they bore testimony to the Resurrection of Christ. We hear Athanasius, the Saint of the Divinity, using the fact of the Resurrection against his adversaries: we hear his followers, the defenders of Christianity, smiling in their turn with the unanswerable argument of the Resurrection. From each century a song, and all unite in one grand symphony. The mighty anthem goes up; the song of triumph cleaves the sky: *Resurrexit sicut dixit,* "He has risen, as he said."

And if by some miraculous power it were given us to look into the court of heaven; if for a moment, on this day, the eternal gates were lifted, we could hear issuing forth the song of the myriad angels, companions of those who stood within the tomb, the song of heaven's triumph: *Resurrexit sicut dixit,* "He has risen, as he said."

Right, then, is it that the Church on earth should on this day, above all others, rejoice. She sings to-day the triumph of her Founder. She chants to-day the glory of the Son of God. Our hearts, our wills, our minds, our souls are with her.

The faith which springs up lively within our souls, the fountain of justification; the hope that inspires us in consequence of

the great fact we commemorate; the charity towards God and man which is to be found only in the Christian heart; the joy that is the fruit of all these; the joy of sympathy with Jesus Christ the Victor, the Conqueror, — all these are summed up in that cry which our beloved Church in her raptures of love repeats again and again: *Resurrexit sicut dixit,* "He said he would arise, and he has risen."

Easter, a Season of Rejoicing

BY THE REV. M. BOSSAERT

Throughout the world, wherever the light of our holy faith shines, is heard to-day the joyful cry of the Catholic Church: "Alleluia, Christ is risen!" Why, we may be asked, are all men thus called to share in the joy of our Lord's resurrection? It is because He accomplished this work for all mankind as well as for Himself. Just as it was for us that He assumed human nature and suffered on the cross, so was it for us that He rose again from the dead. He rose in order to fill our hearts with joy and consolation, and therefore we may regard Easter as a most joyful festival.

I. That we may fully realize the gladness of Easter, let us once more survey the days that have just passed. Everything in their course suggested our Lord's suffering and death: the lamentations, the black vestments worn by the priests, the bare altars, the silence of the bells, all recalled to us more vividly than ever the Apostle's words that Christ became "obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." Silently, in sorrow and mourning, we accompanied our Lord in thought from the Mount of Olives to Golgotha; we watched His agony in the Garden of Gethsemani and heard the sentence against Him pronounced by His unjust judges; we listened to the strokes of the cruel scourge, tearing His tender Body, we saw the crown of thorns piercing His Sacred Head, and we seemed to catch the words of the infuriated mob crying: "Crucify him; his blood be upon us and upon our children!" We saw Him staggering under the weight of the cross on the way to Calvary, and heard the blows of the hammer with which they nailed Him to the cross; we beheld Him

raised aloft, amid the jeers and insults of His enemies, and we heard His last words: "It is consummated; Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." We watched His Sacred Head sink in death, and finally we stood by when His most holy Body was laid in the grave. Had His enemies really triumphed? had death gained dominion over Him? would the grave be His last resting place? No; death had no power over the Lord of life.

II. Where God intends to display His omnipotence, the world's resistance is vain and ineffectual. He broke open the gates of death and destroyed its sway. In spite of the heavy stone barring the entrance to the sepulchre, in spite of the official seal set upon it, and in spite of the guards, our Lord triumphed over death on the morning of Easter Sunday, came forth from the grave and returned to life in undying glory. By His own power and authority He took back the life that He had voluntarily laid down on the cross. Yes, our Lord did indeed rise again on the third day, as He had often foretold, and not only the angels, the pious women and His disciples, but also the soldiers guarding the sepulchre, and even His enemies, bore witness to His Resurrection. It is as much beyond question as any event that ever took place; it is no less certain than His birth and life, and St. John Chrysostom is right in saying: "If Jesus did not rise again, it cannot be true that He ever was born."

III. Let us then rejoice at our Lord's Resurrection, for thereby He has given us the surest proof that He is in truth our Redeemer and the Son of God. We know that the sentence pronounced against us by God's justice has been recalled, and the guilt of our sins removed, so that we have regained the grace and friendship with God which had been lost to us through sin. We know in whom we believe, and no doubt or uncertainty can ever disturb us. By His Resurrection Jesus showed Himself to be indeed the Son of God, and therefore what He teaches is the absolute truth, far above the conflict of human opinions and the errors of our age. Our glad conviction is based on no learned arguments, nor on the laborious investigations of men liable to error, nor on our own views which to-day seem true and to-morrow may appear false; but it rests on the Word of the Son of God, which abideth forever. All the promises that He

made to the just and righteous will be fulfilled, as well as the threats uttered against the ungodly; no word of His will remain void. If He had not risen from the dead, we should be, as St. Paul says, the most miserable of men, for without His Resurrection there would have been no Redemption, and we should still be in darkness and error; without it all our good works would have been unprofitable, and all our hopes vain.

Rejoice, therefore, every Christian soul, for your Redeemer liveth; He, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, hath triumphed; He hath overcome death, and by His Resurrection hath manifested His Godhead to the whole world. Amen.

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LOW SUNDAY

SUBJECT

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

TEXT

Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.—JOHN XX. 22, 23.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. It was on the very day of our Lord's Resurrection from the dead that, appearing to His Apostles as they

were gathered together in the supper room, He gave them the power of raising souls from spiritual death to life. To convince them that it was Himself, He entered the room, the doors being closed, and showed them His hands and feet; and then, before instituting the Sacrament of Peace, He said: "Peace be to you." Forthwith He continued: "As the Father hath sent me," namely, to save that which was lost, "I also send you," that is, to apply the fruits of my redemption to the souls of men by reconciling them to God. Then, as a sign of the greatness of the power they were receiving, He breathed on them and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," etc. The exercise of this power of forgiving sins is continued in the Sacrament of Penance by the true successors of the Apostles.

I. The nature of the Sacrament of Penance. 1. Penance is a Sacrament in which sins committed after Baptism are forgiven. 2. That Penance is a Sacrament is clear, (a) because like Baptism it remits sin; (b) because it has all the elements necessary for a Sacrament, since it is an external sign of inward grace instituted by Christ on the evening of the Resurrection. 3. This Sacrament was instituted by Christ for two reasons: (a) in order that through the external acts of confession and absolution men might have greater assurance of pardon than they could have by internal repentance alone; (b) in order that by the use of a Sacrament men might realize more vividly that their forgiveness was due to the mercy of Christ. 4. Unlike some of the other Sacraments, Penance may be received more than once.

II. The parts of the Sacrament of Penance. 1. The essential parts of this Sacrament are matter and form: (a) the **remote matter** is all the sins committed after Baptism; (b) the **proximate matter** is the three acts of the penitent, i.e., confession, contrition, and satisfaction; (c) the **form** of the Sacrament is the words of absolution pronounced by the priest. 2. In the Old Law the priest merely declared that the leper was cleansed, while the priest in the Sacrament of Penance not only

declares the sinner absolved but truly frees him from his sins. 3. The matter and form of Penance are accompanied by certain prayers and rites on the part of the priest and the penitent, which are very ancient and useful, but not essential to the Sacrament, such as the prayer for mercy on the part of the priest, and the confiteor before confession on the part of the penitent.

III. The effects of the Sacrament of Penance. 1. Penance first restores the soul to the grace and friendship of God. 2. Penance gives peace and joy of conscience. 3. Finally Penance blots out sins no matter how grievous, how numerous, or how often repeated, provided there be sincere repentance.

CONCLUSION. 1. From the solemn words of our Lord in this day's Gospel it is clear that He has set up in His Church a tribunal before which every sinner must appear in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism (Conc. of Trent, sess. 14, cans. 6, 7, cap. 2). 2. We must remember that the absolution of the priest is not sufficient without the proper acts on the part of the penitent. The penitent must make his confession, have true internal contrition, a firm purpose of amendment, and the intention of performing his penance. 3. Remembering the great blessings of spiritual resurrection and peace conferred by this Sacrament, we should not only make frequent and fervent use of it, but should not fail to return thanks each time we go to confession for the divine mercy that has been shown us.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part II

PENANCE AS A SACRAMENT

With regard to external penance, the pastor will teach that it is that which constitutes the Sacrament of Penance: it consists of certain sensible things significant of that which passes interiorly in the soul; and the faithful are to be informed, in the first place, why the Redeemer was pleased to give it a place among the sacraments.

WHY INSTITUTED BY OUR LORD

His object was, no doubt, to remove in a great measure all uncertainty as to the pardon of sin promised by God when He said: "If the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments, and do judgment, and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die." [1] Pronouncing upon his own actions, every man has reason to question the accuracy of his own judgment, and hence, on the sincerity of interior penance the mind must be held in anxious suspense. To calm this our solicitude, the Redeemer instituted the Sacrament of Penance, in which we cherish a well-founded hope that our sins are forgiven us by the absolution of the priest; and the faith which we justly have in the efficacy of the Sacraments has much influence in tranquillizing the troubled conscience and giving peace to the soul. The voice of the priest who legitimately absolves our sins is to be heard as that of Christ Himself, who said to the lame man: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." [2]

Moreover, as salvation is unattainable except through Christ and the merits of His passion, the institution of this Sacrament was in itself most suitable and for us most useful. Penance is the channel through which the blood of Christ flows into the soul, washes away the stains contracted after Baptism, and calls forth from us the grateful acknowledgment that to the Saviour alone we are indebted for the blessing of a reconciliation with God.

PENANCE PROVED TO BE A SACRAMENT

That Penance is a Sacrament the pastor will not find it difficult to establish. Baptism is a Sacrament because it washes away all, particularly original, sin; Penance also washes away all sins of thought or deed committed after Baptism; on the same principle, therefore, Penance is a Sacrament.

Again, and the argument is conclusive, a Sacrament is the sign of a sacred thing, and what is done externally by the priest and the penitent is a sign of what takes place internally in the soul.

[1] Ezek. xviii. 21.

[2] Matt. ix. 2; C. of Trent, sess. 14, c. 1; Innoc. I, Epist. 91 of inter epist. Aug.

The penitent unequivocally expresses by words and actions that he has turned away from sin. The priest, too, by words and actions gives us easily to understand that the mercy of God is exercised in the remission of sin. This is also clearly evinced by these words of the Saviour: "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . . whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."[1] The absolution of the priest, which is expressed in words, seals, therefore, the remission of sins which it accomplishes in the soul, and thus is Penance invested with all the necessary conditions of a Sacrament, and is, therefore, truly a Sacrament.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE MAY BE REPEATED

The faithful are next to be taught that Penance is not only to be numbered among the Sacraments, but also among the Sacraments that may be repeated. To Peter, asking if sin may be forgiven seven times, our Lord replies: "I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven times."[2] Whenever, therefore, the ministry of the priest is to be exercised towards those who seem to lack trust in the infinite goodness and mercy of God, the zealous pastor will seek to inspire them with confidence, and to reanimate their hopes of obtaining the grace of God. This he will find it easy to accomplish by expounding the preceding words of our Lord, by adducing other texts of the same import, which are to be found numerously scattered throughout the sacred volume, and by adopting those reasons and arguments which are supplied by St. Chrysostom in his book "on the fallen," and by St. Ambrose in his treatise on penance.[3]

THE MATTER OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

As, then, among the Sacraments there is none on which the faithful should be better informed, they are to be taught that it differs from the other Sacraments in this: the matter of the other Sacraments is some production of nature or art, but the acts of the penitent — contrition, confession, and satisfaction — consti-

[1] Matt. xvi. 19. [2] Matt. xviii. 22.

[3] Chrys. l. 5, lib. de laps. repar.; de poenit dist. 3, c. talis.; Amb. de poenit. lib. 1, cc. 1, 2. See also Aug. lib. de vera et falsa poenit. c. 5, de poenit. dist. 3, adhuc instant.

tute, as has been defined by the Council of Trent, the matter as it were (*quasi materia*) of the Sacrament of Penance.[1] They are called parts of penance, because required in the penitent, by divine institution, for the integrity of the Sacrament and the full and entire remission of sin.

When the holy synod says that they are "the matter as it were," it is not because they are not the real matter, but because they are not, like water in Baptism and chrism in Confirmation, matter that may be applied externally.

IN WHAT SENSE SINS ARE THE MATTER OF THIS SACRAMENT

With regard to the opinion of some, who hold that the sins themselves constitute the matter of this Sacrament, if well weighed it will not be found to differ from what has been already laid down. We say that wood which is consumed by fire is the matter of fire; and sins which are destroyed by Penance may also be called, with propriety, the matter of Penance.

THE FORM OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

The form also, because well calculated to excite the faithful to receive with fervent devotion the grace of this Sacrament, the pastor will not omit to explain. The words that compose the form are: "I ABSOLVE THEE," as may be inferred not only from these words of the Redeemer: "Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven,"[2] but also from the same doctrine of Jesus Christ as handed down by Apostolic tradition.

That this is the perfect form of the Sacrament of Penance the very nature of the form of a Sacrament proves. The form of a Sacrament signifies what the Sacrament accomplishes: these words "I absolve thee" signify the accomplishment of absolution from sin through the instrumentality of this Sacrament; they therefore constitute its form. Sins are, as it were, the chains by which the soul is fettered and from the bondage of which it is "loosed" by the Sacrament of Penance.

This form is not less true when pronounced by the priest over him who by means of perfect contrition has already obtained the pardon of his sins. Perfect contrition, it is true, reconciles the

[1] Sess. 24, de poenit. c. 3, can. 4. [2] Matt. xviii. 18.

sinner to God, but his justification is not to be ascribed to perfect contrition alone, independently of the desire which it includes of receiving the Sacrament of Penance.

WHY THE FORM OF ABSOLUTION IS ACCOMPANIED WITH PRAYERS

Many prayers accompany the form, not because they are deemed necessary, but in order to remove every obstacle which the unworthiness of the penitent may oppose to the efficacy of the Sacrament. Let then the sinner pour out his heart in fervent thanks to God, who has invested the ministers of his Church with such ample powers! Unlike the authority given to the priests of the Old Law to declare the leper cleansed from his leprosy,[1] the power with which the priests of the New Law are invested is not simply to declare that sins are forgiven, but, as the ministers of God, really to absolve from sin; a power which God Himself, the author and source of grace and justification, exercises through their ministry.

THE RITES TO BE OBSERVED IN RECEIVING THIS SACRAMENT

The rites used in the administration of this Sacrament also demand the serious attention of the faithful. They will enable them to form a more just estimate of the blessings which it bestows, recollecting that as servants they are reconciled to the best of masters, or rather as children to the tenderest of fathers. They will also serve to place in a clearer point of view the duty of those who desire (and desire every one should) to prove their grateful recollection of so inestimable a favor. Humbled in spirit, the sincere penitent casts himself down at the feet of the priest, to testify, by this his humble demeanor, that he acknowledges the necessity of eradicating pride, the root of all those enormities which he now deplores. In the minister of God, who sits in the tribunal of Penance as his legitimate judge, he venerates the power and person of our Lord Jesus Christ; for in the administration of this, as in that of the other Sacraments, the priest represents the character and discharges the functions of Jesus Christ. Acknowledging himself deserving of the sever-

[1] Levit. xiii. 9; xiv. 2.

est chastisements, and imploring the pardon of his guilt, the penitent next proceeds to the confession of his sins. To the antiquity of all these rites St. Denis bears the most authentic testimony.[1]

ADVANTAGES OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

To the faithful, however, nothing will be found more advantageous, nothing better calculated to animate them to frequent the Sacrament of Penance with alacrity, than the frequent exposition of the inestimable advantages which it confers. They will then see that of penance it may be truly said, that "its root is bitter, but its fruit sweet." The great efficacy of penance is, therefore, that it restores us to the favor of God, and unites us to Him in the closest bonds of friendship.[2]

From this reconciliation with God the devout soul, who approaches the Sacrament with deep sentiments of piety and religion, sometimes experiences the greatest tranquillity and peace of conscience, a tranquillity and peace accompanied with the sweetest spiritual joy.

There is no sin, however grievous, no crime, however enormous or however frequently repeated, which Penance does not remit. "If," says the Almighty by the mouth of his prophet, "the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments, and do judgment, and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die. I will not remember all his iniquities which he hath done."[3] "If," says St. John, "we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins";[4] and a little after he adds: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."[5]

If, therefore, we read in the pages of inspiration of some who earnestly implored the mercy of God but implored it in vain, it is because they did not repent sincerely and from their hearts.[6] When we also meet in the Sacred Scriptures and in the writings of the Fathers passages which seem to say that some sins are

[1] In epist. ad Demoph. See also Tertul. lib. de poenit. c. 9.
[2] C. of Trent, sess. 14, can. 3, & c. 1, de poenitent.
[3] Ezek. xviii. 21, 22.
[4] 1 John i. 9.
[5] 1 John ii. 1, 2.
[6] 2 Mach. ix. 13.

irremissible, we are to understand such passages to mean that it is very difficult to obtain the pardon of them. A disease may be said to be incurable when the patient loathes the medicine that would accomplish his cure; and in the same sense some sins may be said to be irremissible when the sinner rejects the grace of God, the proper medicine of salvation. To this effect St. Augustine says: "When, after having arrived at a knowledge of God through the grace of Jesus Christ, any one opposes the fellowship of the faith and maliciously resists the grace of Jesus Christ, so great is the enormity of his crime that, although his guilty conscience obliges him to acknowledge and declare his guilt, he cannot submit to the humiliation of imploring pardon." [1]

PENANCE NECESSARY TO OBTAIN THE PARDON OF SIN

To return to Penance. To it belongs in so special a manner the efficacy of remitting actual guilt that without its intervention we cannot obtain or even hope for pardon. It is written: "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all . . . perish." [2] These words of our Lord are to be understood of grievous and deadly sins, although, as St. Augustine observes, venial sins also require some penance. "If," says he, "without penance venial sin could be remitted, the daily penance performed for them by the Church would be nugatory." [3]

THE THREE INTEGRAL PARTS OF PENANCE

But as on matters which in any degree affect moral actions it is not enough to convey instruction in general terms, the pastor will be careful to expound severally all those particulars which may give the faithful a knowledge of that penance which is unto salvation. To this Sacrament, then, it is peculiar that, besides matter and form, which are common to all the Sacraments, it has also, as we said before, what are called integral parts, and these integral parts are contrition, confession, and satisfaction. "Penance," says St. Chrysostom, "induces the sinner cheerfully to undergo every rigor; his heart is pierced with con-

[1] Lib. 1, de sermon. Domini in monte, cc. 42, 44, et retract. lib. c. 8, 19; Aug. serm. 1, de verbis Domini, et epist. 50, ad Bonif.

[2] Luke xiii. 3, 5.

[3] Aug. lib. 50, hom. 50, epist. 168, et Ench. cap. 71.

trition; his lips utter the confession of his guilt; and his actions breathe humility, and are accepted by God as a satisfaction." [1]

THEIR NATURE

These component parts of penance are such as we say are necessary to constitute a whole. The human form, for instance, is composed of many members, — of hands, feet, eyes, etc., — of which, if any are wanting, man is justly deemed imperfect, and, if none are wanting, perfect. Similarly, Penance consists of the three parts which we have already enumerated; and although, as far as regards the nature of Penance, contrition and confession are sufficient for justification, yet if unaccompanied with satisfaction something is still wanting to its integrity.

THEIR CONNECTION

So connected then are these parts one with the other, that contrition and a disposition to satisfaction precede confession, and contrition and confession precede satisfaction.

WHY PENANCE CONSISTS OF THESE INTEGRAL PARTS

Why these are integral parts of penance may be thus explained: We sin against God by *thought*, *word*, and *deed:* when recurring to the power of the keys, we should therefore endeavor to appease His wrath, and obtain the pardon of our sins by the very same means by which we offended His supreme majesty.

In further explanation we may also add, that penance is, as it were, a compensation for offences, which proceed from the free will of the person offending, and is appointed by the will of God, to whom the offence has been offered. On the part of the penitent, therefore, a willingness to make this compensation is required, and in this willingness chiefly consists contrition. The penitent must also submit himself to the judgment of the priest, who is the vicegerent of God, to enable him to award a punishment proportioned to the guilt; and hence are clearly understood the nature and necessity of confession and satisfaction.

[1] Hom. 11. See C. of Trent, 14, de poenit. cap. 3, can. 4. Likewise, C. of Florence, in doctrin. de Sacram.

Sermons

The Sacrament of Penance

BY THE REV. J. A. M. GILLIS, M.A.

He in whom was found no shadow of imperfection could well challenge the scrutiny of His accusers; He of whom it is written, "It was fitting that we should have . . . an high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," could stand in the holy temple and in the august splendor of His majesty say to His hearers, "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" The words fell from no mere human lips: they were the words of Him who was conceived before the daystar, in the bosom of the Father. They were the words of an incarnate God.

With us, born in the shadow of sin — the heritage transmitted to us from our first parents — and prone to evil on account of our fallen nature, the case is different. We feel the weight of our imperfection, and we must acknowledge our innate weakness, even if the testimony of the Holy Ghost did not assure us of our spiritual lapses. "If," says the Scripture, "we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8). Hence, we must in all humility acknowledge our guilt before Him whose gaze reveals our imperfections as the effulgent rays of the noonday sun lays bare the impurities at the bottom of the stream.

This confession of guilt comes to us through the ages. It is the natural outcome of sorrow for that guilt incurred. It was the key-note of Adam's repentance on the sad day of the fall. No sooner had he tasted of that bitter fruit which brought sin to the world and all our woe, than he hid himself in shame — the first impulse of repentance. And when the voice of God calling him to account sounded through the groves of paradise, he poured forth the story of his misfortune with the candid humility of a heart loaded with grief which must be assuaged by a full confession. "I heard thy voice in paradise; and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." And again, "The woman, whom thou gavest me to be my companion, gave me of the tree,

and I did eat" (Gen. iii. 10, 12). It was the full confession of guilt made with humble sincerity.

It was a similar acknowledgment of guilt, in the true spirit of repentance, which saved the Ninivites from the doom pronounced against them by the prophet. Their sins were great before Heaven, and the prophet sounded the warning of Divine wrath through the streets of the city. Their measure of sin was full, but the acknowledgment of the guilt, in sorrow and repentance, averted their impending destruction. From the king on the throne to the toiler in the field they clothe themselves in the garb of penance — an open confession of their sin. It was such humble and sincere confession of guilt on the part of the Ninivites which appeased the just anger of God and averted the destruction of the city pronounced by the lips of the prophet.

All through the long centuries preceding the advent of Christ, penance — the humble acknowledgment of guilt — was the only means of reconciling the sinner to God. And so necessary is this great virtue as the sinner's stepping-stone to salvation that, as Holy Scripture declares, all other efforts are in vain without it. "If we do not penance, we shall fall into the hands of the Lord" (Eccl. ii. 22). It was the invariable warning of God, through the mouths of His holy prophets, when He would rouse His people from the lethargy of sin; it was the heralded proclamation of the Angel of the desert when he went as the precursor to announce the advent of the Messiah: "Do penance: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The Holy Spirit with awful significance refers all to this virtue, as spoken by the Evangelist: "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 3). Our blessed Lord lays down as the great mission of His coming to the world the calling of sinners to repentance (Luke v. 32). Hence His Apostles, armed with His Divine authority and with credentials as His ambassadors, made this moving of sinners to repentance the foundation of their preaching (Acts ii. 38; xi. 18).

This virtue of Penance, so necessary to the sinner at all times for appeasing the Divine anger, was raised by the Saviour to the dignity of a Sacrament of the New Law. As such it confers sanctifying grace directly by its own inherent virtue from the in-

stitution of Christ, and the agency of the Holy Spirit, whereas in the Old Law, like the sacramentals, its virtue depended on the disposition of the sinner. But, like all the sacraments, Penance, in order to have its effect of conferring grace, must be received with the proper dispositions. The valid matter of the Sacrament is the telling of the sins with sincere sorrow and with a firm resolution to sin no more; and for the entirety and full efficiency of the Sacrament the matter also includes the satisfaction by way of Penance enjoined on the penitent. The sacramental form is the absolution pronounced by the priest.

That Christ instituted this Sacrament is evident from the words of to-day's Gospel: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John xx. 22, 23). "And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19). Here by the words of absolution the remission of sin is effected on the authority of Christ. Hence, sanctifying grace is infused into the soul, which before was the abode of sin. There are also present the elements of *matter* and *form*, which constitute a sacrament. The sins which are remitted are there as the remote matter. And since the act of the priest is a judicial act, as is evident from the words, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained," the confession of guilt necessary for the judicial pronouncement constitutes the proximate matter, while the absolution itself pronounced by the priest is the form of the Sacrament, giving efficacy to the matter.

Even if we regard the sins alone as the matter of the Sacrament, the power of the keys left, in all its plenitude, to the Apostles, and in their person to their successors, would invest the absolution of the priest with the essentials of sacramental form. Therefore by the same line of argument this institution of Christ, giving the power of the keys, clearly points out a Sacrament. The words "I absolve thee" of the priest, through the power by which he is invested by Christ, signify the accomplishment of the remission of sin; and since the form of a Sacrament is that which signifies what the Sacrament produces or

accomplishes, these words of absolution are, of their nature, the sacramental form, while the sins which are loosed, like so many chains cut asunder, are the matter.

True, that the Sacrament may produce its effect the absolution presupposes sorrow with a resolution of amendment on the part of the sinner, but such disposition on the part of the sinner is necessary as well when the confession of the sins is regarded as the proximate matter.

As to the necessity of receiving this Sacrament the holy Council of Trent says: "For those who fall into sin after Baptism, the Sacrament of Penance is as necessary to salvation as Baptism is to those who have not been baptized." On this subject the learned St. Jerome calls this Sacrament of Penance the second plank after the shipwreck of sin. Baptism, which washes us from the sticky mire of original sin, and from being "children of wrath" makes us children of God, is the first plank of salvation. The one who has once been rescued from shipwreck must exercise as much caution to avoid falling into the danger again as if he never experienced such a misfortune; and should he become a prey again to sea and tempest after his first bitter experience, he is as much in need of a helping hand as if he were never before the victim of such misfortune. In a similar manner those who have been once regenerated and made heirs of Heaven, but who have forfeited their right by the commission of mortal sin, must have access to the power of the keys to be again loosed from the fetters that bind them.

Hence the Sacrament of Penance is a necessity of *means* to all who labor under the awful load of mortal sin. It is also a necessity of *precept* by reason of the institution of Christ, giving the power of binding and loosing to the priests of the Church.

When Christ said, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven," He conferred a power which it was His blessed will should be exercised.

In a similar manner, when He said, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained," He invested His Apostles and their successors — the priests of the Church — with a judicial power which

would be meaningless if such power were not exercised according to the manner in which it was conferred.

The priest by this investiture possesses not only the power to remit sins, but also the power to retain them. Hence his function is a real judicial one. Therefore his judicial pronouncement in the sentence of absolution would have no significance whatever except the penitent be proven worthy or unworthy by the witness which he bears against himself in the tribunal of Confession.

When God called Moses to the summit of Mount Sinai amid the awful sublimity fitting the presence of the Omnipotence, He gave him in all its elaborate details the plan of the Ark of the Testament; and when afterwards the sacred vessel was to be built He told Moses to make it according to the model given him in the mount. Thus God decrees concerning His holy ordinances. They are to be observed as He dictates. When Christ then invests His priesthood with the fulness of power to remit and to retain sins, this power is to be exercised in the exact manner indicated by His words, namely, as a judicial power pronounced over a confessed sinner.

The precept of the Church to receive this Sacrament at least once a year must be understood to oblige those who have committed grievous sin. The Church is the mouthpiece of God, through which He teaches mankind. As such it follows that her precepts must not exceed the limits of the Divine ordinances of which she is the interpreter. But as nothing but mortal sin excludes from Heaven, or destroys, in its entirety, sanctifying grace in the soul, the Divine precept of Penance obliges only those who are spiritually dead through the guilt of mortal sin. Hence, the ecclesiastical precept of annual confession is not obligatory on those who are free from mortal sin.

Matter and *form* constitute the essential elements of every Sacrament. In Penance this matter, at least the remote matter, is sin; and the form is the absolution pronounced by the priest: "I absolve thee from thy sins." Besides these essentials of matter and form Penance has its integral parts — parts necessary to its completeness — and in the case of at least one of them, necessary for its valid reception. These integral parts are Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction. St. Chrysostom enumer-

ates these parts when he says: "Penance induces the sinner cheerfully to undergo every rigor; his heart is pierced with Contrition; his lips utter the Confession of his guilt; and his actions breathe humility and are accepted by God as satisfaction." As man has sinned against God by thought, word, and deed, it is very befitting that his act of reconciliation with God should embrace the means by which he incurred the Divine anger. Hence, inwardly, he should be filled with sorrow for, and detestation of, his guilt; his lips should utter an acknowledgment of his repentance; and penitential works should be performed as restitution to the offended Deity. These parts are not to be considered as distinct parts independent of each other. At least Confession and Contrition are so mutually connected that Confession must be accompanied by Contrition, and Contrition presupposes the intention to confess.

True, Contrition, without Confession, will of itself appease the Divine anger. But Confession being a precept, no one can make an act of sincere Contrition without at the same time having the intention to comply with the ordinances of God and His Church. Besides, Contrition, in order of itself to produce its effect of breaking the bonds of sin, must be of that high and perfect order that its presence in the soul is a rare disposition. Hence the infinite goodness of God has supplied the power of the keys, rendering it easy for the sinner to approach the doors of reconciliation. Having this in view, the holy Fathers declared that by the keys the gates of Heaven are thrown open.

The sacraments produce what they signify, and this signification is mirrored in the sacred rites of the administration of them. In Penance, a heart smitten with sorrow is the inward state of the penitent. In the ceremonial rite attending the reception of the Sacrament, the outward demeanor of the penitent should be in harmony with this inward sorrow. He should reverently kneel at the feet of the priest, regarding him as the representative of Christ bearing the Divine seal which gives the Divine approval to all his pronouncements.

The advantages of the worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance are incalculable. Even as humility is the root of all virtue, and the whole beautiful fabric of Christian perfection

rises high and majestic on this foundation of humility, so the penitent who becomes habituated to the self-accusation of the confessional learns to appreciate his own weakness and to place all his trust and confidence in Him in whom we live, move, and have our being.

It is a work of Divine favor which places the sinner in the friendship of God. "If," says the Almighty by the mouth of His prophet, "the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments, and do judgment, and justice, living he shall live, and . . . I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done" (Ezek. 18, 21). And again, in the words of the Apostle: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins" (1 John i. 9).

How Peace that has been Lost may be Regained

BY THE REV. M. BOSSAERT

Our Divine Saviour was announced by the prophet Isaias as the Prince of Peace, and at His birth the angels proclaimed peace to men. Now, when He has accomplished the great work of our redemption, our risen Lord greets His followers with the words, "Peace be with you." In order to supply men with the means of regaining peace of heart after losing it by sin, He breathed On His Apostles and addressed to them the memorable words: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." It was on this occasion, as you know, that our divine Saviour instituted the Holy Sacrament of Penance. Let us take this Sacrament as the subject of our meditation to-day.

I. It was by no mere accident that our Lord instituted this Sacrament on the evening after His glorious Resurrection. By His Passion and death He had reconciled the whole human race with God, and obtained grace for all men. Now He wished to provide a means whereby the grace of forgiveness, that He had won for all, should be conferred upon each individual, a means whereby the full tide of God's grace might be conveyed by innumerable channels to every needy soul. Therefore when, after completing the work of our redemption, He again appeared in

the midst of His disciples, His first care was to institute a permanent means of enabling every human being who truly and earnestly desires it to participate in the forgiveness of sins. This is the Holy Sacrament of Penance, which He instituted when He gave to His Apostles and their successors power and authority to remit in His Name the sins of all who are of a contrite heart.

II. By instituting the Sacrament of Penance, that is so necessary and so beneficial to us all, our Divine Saviour gave us fresh proof of His infinite love and mercy, and we must always be grateful to Him for it. In this way He made the Apostles and their successors, and all priests possessing faculties from their bishop, the friends, confessors, and counsellors of His people. A Catholic readily confides in them and opens his heart to them, disclosing all his inclinations, his passions, and the motives of his actions. A confessor can point out the dangers in his condition, and the proximate and remote consequences of his actions; he can admonish him as a father, and warn him against possible disasters; he can spur him on to adopt a way of life that will make him pleasing to God and man, and happy both in this life and the next; he can show him how to resist sin in the future, and how eventually to overcome it; he can suggest means of improvement and of attaining perfection; in short, he can be his instructor and the physician of his soul.

III. Many would have made shipwreck of their lives had they not been warned in time by their confessor; many would have plunged deeper and deeper into sin, had not his voice induced them to return to the safe path; many would have rendered themselves miserable for time and for eternity, had the Holy Sacrament of Penance not existed, had they never confessed their sins, and had they not thus been extricated from the abyss into which they had fallen. How useful and beneficial is this Sacrament!

Let us therefore thank our Lord most heartily for His goodness in instituting this sacrament, which makes it so easy for us to cleanse ourselves from the guilt of our sins; and let us show our gratitude by frequently availing ourselves of this holy Sacrament, and always preparing carefully and conscientiously

for its reception. If we do this, it will be of the greatest benefit to us, and bring us a rich blessing, so that we shall enjoy true peace both in this world and for all eternity. Amen.

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SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

SUBJECT

ECCLESIASTICAL ORDERS AND THE HIERARCHY OF THE CHURCH

TEXT

You are now converted to the shepherd and bishop of your souls. — 1 PETER ii. 25.

I am the good shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know me. — JOHN x. 14.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. In to-day's Gospel our Saviour likens the relations between Himself and the faithful to those which exist between a shepherd and his flock. As the shepherd guides, protects, and feeds his sheep, so our Lord provides for the souls of men. Before ascending to His Father after the Resurrection, the Saviour confided to St. Peter and his successors in the Church the office of chief visible shepherd on earth when he said: "Feed my lambs," "feed my sheep" (John xxi. 15, 16, 17). Under the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, there are many

subordinate and assistant shepherds constituting the clergy of the Church. In order that the dignity and veneration proper to the priesthood may be more manifest, there are various lesser offices which serve it and are preparatory to it. A man passes from the state of a layman to that of a cleric by reception of ecclesiastical tonsure. After Tonsure he receives in turn the four Minor Orders; and then in course of time the Major Orders of Subdiaconate, Diaconate, and Priesthood are conferred upon him.

I. Explanation of the meaning and functions of tonsure and the four minor orders. 1. **Tonsure** is not an order, but it admits the recipient to the state and privileges of clerics. 2. **Porter:** The duty of porters is to take care of the keys and doors of the Church, ring the bell for services, etc. 3. **Reader:** It is the duty of readers to instruct converts in the rudiments of faith, to take charge of the sacred books, to act as secretaries to Bishops and priests, etc. 4. **Exorcist:** The duty of exorcists was to expel evil spirits from the bodies of the possessed. Diabolical possession was very common in the early days of the Church. Exorcism since the fifth century may not be used without permission of the Bishop. 5. **Acolyte** serves the deacon and subdeacon at Mass officially. Lay persons may assist the priest, but not officially.

II. Major Orders. 1. **Subdiaconate:** The subdeacon assists the deacon at Mass, handles the sacred vessels that do not contain the Blessed Sacrament, and prepares the altar linen. Two obligations accompany the subdiaconate, namely, perpetual chastity and the daily recitation of the divine office. It is befitting that the clergy should be unmarried because they are representatives of Christ and ministers of the Holy Eucharist, and because the celibate state is more perfect and a celibate clergy more beneficial to the people. This, however, is a matter of Church discipline only. The Church permits marriage to some of the Oriental clergy. 2. **Diaconate:** The deacon serves the Bishops and priests at the altar, as the Levites served the priests in the Old Law. 3. **The Priesthood:** The distinctive office of

the priest is to offer the Sacrifice of Mass, administer the Sacraments, to preach, bless, and rule.

III. The various degrees of the Priesthood. 1. The first degree is that of priests, who preside over the faithful committed to them. 2. The second degree is that of Bishops, who rule over dioceses allotted to them. 3. The third degree is that of Archbishops, who preside over the Bishops of a province. 4. A Primate is the chief Archbishop of a country. 5. Patriarchs are Bishops with special jurisdiction. 6. Cardinals are princes of the Church who elect and advise the Pope. 7. The Pope is the supreme visible head of the universal Church.

CONCLUSION. 1. The Priesthood is the height of Orders in the Church, as the Papacy is the supreme degree of jurisdiction. 2. Reverence and loyalty to the ministers of the Church means reverence and loyalty to Christ.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part II

NUMBER OF ORDERS

With regard to the number of orders, the words of the Council of Trent are: "Since the ministry of so exalted a priesthood is a divine thing, it was meet, in order to surround it with the greater dignity and veneration, that in the admirable economy of the Church there should be several distinct orders of ministers, intended by their office to serve the priesthood, and so disposed, that, beginning with the clerical tonsure, they may ascend gradually through the lesser to the greater orders." Their number, according to the uniform and universal doctrine of the Catholic Church, is seven: porter, reader, exorcist, acolyte, subdeacon, deacon, and priest.[1] That these compose the number of ministers in the Church may be proved from the functions necessary to the solemn celebration of Mass, and to the consecration and administration of the Holy Eucharist, for which they were principally instituted. Of these some are greater, which are also

[1] These orders are mentioned by Dionys. lib. Eccl. Hier. cap. 3; Pope Cornel. epist. ad Fab. episcop. Antioch. in Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. 6, cap. 35; C. of Carth. 4, can. 4, seq.; Ignat. epist. ad Antioch.

called "Holy," some lesser, which are called "Minor Orders." The greater or Holy Orders are Subdeaconship, Deaconship, and Priesthood; the lesser or Minor Orders are Porter, Reader, Exorcist, and Acolyte. To facilitate the duty of the pastor, particularly when conveying instruction to those who are about to receive any of the orders, it is necessary to say a few words on each.

TONSURE, ITS FORM, ORIGIN, AND IMPORT

We shall begin with the Tonsure, which is a sort of preparation for receiving orders. As persons are prepared for Baptism by exorcisms, and for marriage by espousals, so those who are consecrated to God by Tonsure are prepared for admission to the Sacrament of Orders. Tonsure declares what manner of person he should be who desires to receive orders. The name "cleric," which he receives then for the first time, implies[1] that thenceforward he has taken the Lord for his inheritance, like those who in the Old Law were consecrated to the service of God, and to whom the Lord forbade that any portion of the ground should be distributed in the land of promise, saying, "I am thy portion and inheritance."[2] This, although true of all Christians, applies in a special manner to those who have been consecrated to the ministry.[3] In Tonsure the hair of the head is cut in the form of a crown, and should be worn in that form, enlarging the crown according as the ecclesiastic advances in orders. This form of the tonsure the Church teaches to be of Apostolic origin: it is mentioned by the most ancient and venerable Fathers, by St. Denis the Areopagite,[4] by St. Augustine,[5] and by St. Jerome.[6]

It is said that the tonsure was first introduced by the prince of the Apostles in honor of the crown of thorns which was pressed upon the head of the Redeemer, so that what was devised by the impiety of the Jews for the ignominy and torture of Christ may be recalled by his Apostles as their ornament and

[1] χλησος, *sors*, a lot. [2] Num. xviii. 20.
[3] See Jerome, epist. 2, ad Nepot. Cited 12, q. 1, c. clericus.
[4] Dionys. de Eccles. Hier. c. 6, part 2.
[5] Aug. serm. 17, ad Fratres in Eremo.
[6] Jerome, in cap. 44. Ezech. See Rhaban. Maur. lib. de institut. cleric.; Bed. lib. hist. 5, Angl. c. 22.

glory. It was also intended to signify that the ministers of religion are in all things so to comport themselves as to carry about them the figure and the likeness of Christ.

Some, however, assert that tonsure is an emblem of the royal dignity, which belongs peculiarly to those who are specially called to the inheritance of God; for to the ministers of the Church belongs in a peculiar manner what the Apostle Peter says of all Christians: "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation."[1]

Others are of opinion that tonsure, which is cut in the form of a circle, the most perfect of all figures, is emblematic of the superior perfection of the ecclesiastical state; or that, as it consists of cutting off hair, which is a sort of superfluity, it implies a contempt of worldly things and a detachment from all earthly cares and concerns.

PORTER

The order of Porter follows Tonsure. Its duty consists in taking care of the keys and door of the Church, and in suffering none to enter to whom entrance is prohibited. The porter also assisted at the Holy Sacrifice, and took care that no one should approach too near the altar or interrupt the celebrant. To the order of Porter also belonged other functions, as is clear from the forms used at his consecration. Taking the keys from the altar and handing them to him, the Bishop says: "CONDUCT YOURSELF AS HAVING TO RENDER AN ACCOUNT TO GOD FOR THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE KEPT UNDER THESE KEYS." That in the ancient Church this office was one of considerable dignity may be inferred from still existing ecclesiastical observances; for to the porter belonged the office of treasurer of the Church, to which was also attached that of guardian of the sacristy, — stations, the duties of which are still numbered among the most honorable functions of the ecclesiastic.[2]

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 9.

[2] On Porter, see C. of Trent, sess. 23, de reform. c. 17; C. of Toledo, c. 6, cited dist. 23, Ostiar.; Isid. lib. de Eccl. c. 14; dist. 25, c. perfectis, and Baron. Annal. Eccl. an. 34, num. 287, et an. 44, num. 78, 80.

READER

The second among the Minor Orders is that of Reader. To him it belongs to read to the people, in a clear and distinct voice, the Sacred Scriptures, particularly those which are read at Matins. On him also devolved the task of instructing the faithful in the rudiments of the faith. Hence the Bishop, in presence of the people, handing him a book which contains what belongs to the exercise of this function, says: "RECEIVE [THIS BOOK,] AND BE YOU A REHEARSER OF THE WORD OF GOD, DESTINED, IF YOU APPROVE YOURSELF FAITHFUL AND USEFUL IN THE DISCHARGE OF YOUR OFFICE, TO HAVE A PART WITH THOSE WHO FROM THE BEGINNING HAVE ACQUITTED THEMSELVES WELL IN THE MINISTRY OF THE DIVINE WORD."[1]

EXORCIST

The third order is that of Exorcist. To him is given power to invoke the name of the Lord over persons possessed by unclean spirits. Hence the Bishop, when ordaining the exorcist, hands him a book containing the exorcisms, and says: "TAKE THIS AND COMMIT IT TO MEMORY, AND HAVE POWER TO IMPOSE HANDS ON PERSONS POSSESSED, BE THEY BAPTIZED OR CATECHUMENS."[2]

ACOLYTE

The fourth and last among the Minor Orders is that of Acolyte. The duty of the acolyte is to attend and serve those in holy orders, deacons and subdeacons, in the ministry of the altar. The acolyte also attends to the lights used at the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, particularly while the Gospel is read. At his ordination, therefore, the Bishop, having carefully admonished him of the nature of the office which he is about to assume, places in his hand a light, with these words: "RECEIVE THIS CANDLESTICK AND CANDLE, AND KNOW THAT HENCEFORWARD YOU ARE APPOINTED

[1] See Cypr. epist. 33, and Tertull. de prescript. c. 61, and Baron. Annal. Eccl. anno. 34, num. 287, et an. 54, num. 78, 79, an. 153, num. 93, an. 456, num. 20.

[2] Concerning Exorcist, see authors cited above, and Baronius, Annal. Eccl. an. 34, num. 287, an. 44, num. 78, 80, an. 237, num. 89; an. 56, num. 5; 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

TO LIGHT THE CHURCH, IN THE NAME OF THE LORD." He then hands him empty cruets, intended to supply wine and water for the sacrifice, saying: "RECEIVE THESE CRUETS, WHICH ARE TO SUPPLY WINE AND WATER FOR THE EUCHARIST OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, IN THE NAME OF THE LORD."[1]

SUBDEACON

Minor Orders, which do not come under the denomination of Holy, and which have hitherto formed the subject-matter of our exposition, are, as it were, the vestibule through which we ascend to Holy Orders. Among the latter the first is that of subdeacon: his office, as the name implies, is to serve the deacon in the ministry of the altar: to him it belongs to prepare the altar-linen, the sacred vessels, the bread and wine necessary for the Holy Sacrifice, to minister water to the priest or Bishop at the washing of the hands at Mass, to read the Epistle, a function which was formerly discharged by the deacon, to assist at Mass in the capacity of a witness, and see that the priest be not disturbed by any one during its celebration.

These functions, which appertain to the ministry of the Subdeacon, may be learned from the solemn ceremonies used at his consecration. In the first place, the Bishop admonishes him that by his ordination he assumes the solemn obligation of perpetual continence, and proclaims aloud that he alone is eligible to this office who is prepared freely to embrace this law. In the next place, when the solemn prayer of the Litanies has been recited, the Bishop enumerates and explains the duties and functions of the subdeacon. This done, each of the candidates for ordination receives from the Bishop a chalice and consecrated paten, and from the archdeacon, cruets filled with wine and water, and a basin and towel for washing and drying the hands, to remind him that he is to serve the deacon. These ceremonies the Bishop accompanies with this solemn admonition: "SEE WHAT SORT OF MINISTRY IS CONFIDED TO YOU: I ADMONISH YOU THEREFORE SO TO CONDUCT YOURSELVES AS TO BE PLEASING IN THE SIGHT OF GOD." Additional prayers are then recited, and when finally the

[1] See also Cypr. epist. 55, and Baronius, Annal. Eccl. an. 44. num. 39, num. 80.

Bishop has clothed the subdeacon with the sacred vestments, when putting on each of which he makes use of appropriate words and ceremonies, he then hands him the book of the Epistles, saying: "RECEIVE THE BOOK OF THE EPISTLES, AND HAVE POWER TO READ THEM IN THE CHURCH OF GOD, BOTH FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD."[1]

DEACON

The second among the Holy Orders is that of deacon. His ministry is more comprehensive, and has been always deemed more holy. To him it belongs constantly to accompany the Bishop, to attend him when preaching, to assist him and the priest also during the celebration of the Holy Mysteries and at the administration of the Sacraments, and to read the Gospel at the Sacrifice of the Mass.

In the primitive ages of the Church he not unfrequently exhorted the faithful to attend to the divine worship, and administered the chalice in those churches in which the faithful received the Holy Eucharist under both kinds. In order to administer to the wants of the needy, to him was also committed the distribution of the goods of the Church.

To the deacon also, as the eye of the Bishop, it belongs to inquire and ascertain who within his diocese lead lives of piety and edification, and who do not; who attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the instructions of their pastors, and who do not; that thus the Bishop, made acquainted by him with these matters, may be enabled to admonish each offender privately, or, should he deem it more conducive to their reformation, to rebuke and correct them publicly. He also calls over the names of catechumens, and presents to the Bishop those who are to be promoted to orders. In the absence of the Bishop and priest, he is also authorized to expound the Gospel to the people, not however from an elevated place, to make it understood that this is not one of his ordinary functions.

That the greatest care should be taken that no unworthy per-

[1] Concerning Subdeacons, see also Cyprian, epist. 24, 42; dist. 17, c. presbyteris; Can. Apost. can. 25; C. of Carthage, 4, can. 5; C. of Arles, 2, can. 2; C. of Orleans, 3, cap. 2; C. of Elvira, can. 33; Leo I, Epist. 82; Annal. Eccl. an. 14, num. 79, 80; an. 253, num. 72, 97; an. 239, num. 21; an. 324, num. 128; an. 588, num. 48; an. 589, num. 6; an. 1057, num. 32.

son be advanced to the office of Deacon is evinced by the emphasis with which the Apostle, writing to Timothy, dwells on the morals, the virtue, the integrity which should mark the lives of those who are invested with this sacred character.[1] The rites and ceremonies used at his ordination also sufficiently convey the same lesson of instruction. The prayers used at the ordination of a deacon are more numerous and solemn than at that of a subdeacon; his person is invested with the sacred stole; of his ordination, as of that of the first deacons who were ordained by the Apostles,[2] the imposition of hands also forms a part; and, finally, the book of the Gospels is handed to him by the Bishop with these words: "RECEIVE POWER TO READ THE GOSPEL IN THE CHURCH OF GOD, AS WELL FOR THE LIVING AS FOR THE DEAD, IN THE NAME OF THE LORD."[3]

PRIEST

The third and highest degree of all Holy Orders is the Priesthood. Persons raised to the Priesthood the Holy Fathers distinguish by two names: they are called "presbyters," which in Greek signifies elders, and which was given them not only to express the mature years required by the Priesthood, but still more the gravity of their manners, their knowledge and prudence. "Venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years: but the understanding of a man is gray hairs."[4] They are also called "priests" (*sacerdotes*), because they are consecrated to God, and to them it belongs to administer the sacraments and to handle sacred things.

THE PRIESTHOOD TWOFOLD

But as the Priesthood is described in the Sacred Scriptures as twofold, internal and external, a line of distinction must be drawn

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 8. [2] Acts vi. 6.

[3] Concerning Deacons, see also Clement of Rome, Constit. Apostol. lib. 2, c. 6; Cypr. de lapsis.; Amb. lib. 1, offic. c. 41; Leo I, serm. de S. Laurent.; Clem. Rom. epist. 1, ad Jacob. Fratrem Domini; Jerome, epist. 48; Baron. Annal. Eccl. an. 33, num. 41; an. 34, num. 283; an. 285, 287; an. 34, num. 316; an. 44, num. 78, 80; an. 57, num. 31, 195; an. 58, num. 102; an. 112, num. 7, 8, 9; an. 316, num. 48; an. 324, num. 325; an. 325, num. 152; an. 401, num. 44, 47; an. 508, num. 15; an. 741, num. 12.

[4] Wisd. 4, 8.

between them, that the pastor may have it in his power to explain to the faithful the Priesthood which is here meant.

The internal Priesthood extends to all the faithful who have been baptized, particularly to the just, who are anointed by the Spirit of God, and by divine grace are made living members of the High Priest Christ Jesus. Through faith inflamed by charity, they offer spiritual sacrifices to God on the altar of their hearts, and in the number of these sacrifices are to be reckoned good and virtuous actions, referred to the glory of God. Hence we read in the Apocalypse that Christ hath "washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us a kingdom, and priests to God and his Father."[1] The doctrine of St. Peter to the same effect we find recorded in these words: "Be you also as living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."[2] The Apostle also exhorts us to present our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God," our reasonable service;[3] and David had said long before: "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."[4] That all these passages refer to the internal Priesthood, it requires little discernment to discover.

The external Priesthood, on the contrary, does not extend indiscriminately to the great body of the faithful;[5] it pertains only to a certain class of persons who, being invested with this august character, and consecrated to God by the lawful imposition of hands and the solemn ceremonies of the Church, are devoted to some particular office in the sacred ministry.

THIS DISTINCTION OBSERVABLE IN THE OLD LAW

This distinction of Priesthood is observable even in the Old Law. We have already seen that David spoke of the internal Priesthood; and with regard to the external, the numerous commands delivered by God to Moses and Aaron in reference to it are too well known to require special mention. Moreover, the Almighty appointed the tribe of Levi to the ministry of the tem-

[1] Apoc. i. 5, 6. [2] 1 Pet. ii. 5. [3] Rom. xii. 1. [4] Ps. l. 19.
[5] Amb. lib. 4, de sacram. cap. 1; Aug. lib. 10, de civ. Dei. cc. 6, 10; Leo. serm. 3, de Annivers Pontific.

ple, and forbade by an express law that any member of a different tribe should assume that function. Osias, stricken by God with leprosy for having usurped the sacerdotal office, was visited with the heaviest chastisement for his arrogant and sacrilegious intrusion.[1] Since, then, we find this same distinction of internal and external Priesthood in the New Law, the faithful are to be informed that we here speak of the external only, for that alone belongs to the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

THE DUTIES OF A PRIEST ARE OUTLINED IN THE RITE OF ORDINATION

The office of the priest is, then, as the rites used at his ordination declare, to offer sacrifice to God, and to administer the Sacraments of the Church.

The Bishop, and after him the priests who may be present, impose hands on the candidate for Priesthood; then placing a stole on his shoulders, he adjusts it in the form of a cross, to signify that the priest receives strength from above, to enable him to carry the cross of Jesus Christ, to bear the sweet yoke of His divine law, and to enforce this law, not by word only, but also by the eloquent example of a holy life.

The Bishop next anoints the candidate's hands with sacred oil, gives him a chalice containing wine and a paten with bread, saying: "RECEIVE POWER TO OFFER SACRIFICE TO GOD, AND TO CELEBRATE MASS AS WELL FOR THE LIVING AS FOR THE DEAD." By these words and ceremonies he is constituted an interpreter and mediator between God and man, the principal function of the Priesthood.

Finally, placing his hands on the head of the person to be ordained, the Bishop says: "RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST. WHOSE SINS YOU SHALL FORGIVE, THEY ARE FORGIVEN THEM: AND WHOSE SINS YOU SHALL RETAIN, THEY ARE RETAINED."[2] He is thus invested with that divine power of forgiving and retaining sins which was conferred by our Lord on his disciples. These are the principal and peculiar functions of the Priesthood.

[1] 1 Par. xxvi. 18, 19. [2] John iii. xx. 22, 23.

THE PRIESTHOOD, ALTHOUGH ONE, HAS DIFFERENT DEGREES OF DIGNITY AND POWER

The order of Priesthood, although essentially one, has different degrees of dignity and power. The first is confined to those who are simply called priests, and whose functions we have now explained.

The second is that of Bishops, who are placed over their respective Sees, to govern not only the other ministers of the Church but also the faithful, and with sleepless vigilance and unwearied care to watch over and promote their salvation. Hence the Sacred Scriptures frequently refer to them as the pastors of the sheep; and their office, and the duties which it imposes, are developed by Paul in his sermon to the Thessalonians, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.[1] Peter also has left for the guidance of Bishops a divine rule; and if their lives harmonize with its spirit, they will no doubt be esteemed, and will really be good pastors.[2] Bishops are also called "Pontiffs," a name borrowed from the ancient Romans, and used to designate their Chief-priests.

The third degree is that of Archbishop: he presides over several Bishops, and is also called "Metropolitan," because he is placed over the Metropolis of the Province. Archbishops, therefore (although their ordination is the same), enjoy more ample power and a more exalted station than Bishops.

Patriarchs hold the fourth place, and are, as the name implies, the first and supreme Fathers in the Episcopal order. Formerly, besides the Sovereign Pontiff there were but four Patriarchs in the Church. Their dignity was not the same. The Patriarch of Constantinople, although last in the order of time, was first in rank — an honor conceded to him as Bishop of Constantinople, the capital of the imperial world. Next to the Patriarchate of Constantinople is that of Alexandria, a see founded by the Evangelist St. Mark by command of the prince of the Apostles. The third is the Patriarchate of Antioch, founded by St. Peter, and the first seat of the Apostolic See; the fourth and last, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, founded by St. James, the brother of our Lord.

[1] Acts xx. 28. [2] 1 Pet. v. 2.

Superior to all these is the Sovereign Pontiff, whom Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, denominated in the Council of Ephesus "the Father and Patriarch of the whole world." He sits in that chair in which Peter, the prince of the Apostles, sat to the close of life; and the Catholic Church recognizes in his person the most exalted degree of dignity, and a full amplitude of jurisdiction not based on synodal or other human constitutions, but emanating from no less an authority than God Himself. As the successor of St. Peter, and the true and legitimate vicar of Jesus Christ, he therefore presides over the Universal Church, the Father and Governor of all the faithful, of Bishops also, and of all other prelates, be their station, rank, or power what it may.[1]

INSTRUCTION TO THE FAITHFUL ON THIS SACRAMENT

In accordance with what has been said, the pastor will inform the faithful what are the principal offices and functions of Ecclesiastical Orders, and their degrees, and also who is the minister of this Sacrament.

Sermon

Holy Orders

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GRAHAM

Introduction. Holy Orders and Matrimony come last in the list of sacramental rites, yet it is they that carry on the Kingdom of God. The fecundity of holy wedlock gives to the Church her faithful people; that of Holy Orders her devoted clergy. There is a striking analogy between them, as, under God, they are both springs of life, one in the natural, the other in the spiritual, order. Both are fenced in, guarded, and sanctified by holy continency. Strict conjugal fidelity and rigid marital purity are to the spouse what holy and spotless chastity are in the priest. Both states imply and connote sacrifice. Of Holy Orders we speak to-day. (No more appropriate occasion can offer to speak on this subject than the present, when a young Levite, fresh from its sacred

[1] On the Primacy of the Pope, see Anacl. epist. 3, c. 3, cited dist. 22, c. Sacrosancta; Greg. lib. 7, epist. 64, 65; Pope Nicholas, epist. ad Mediolanens, cited dist. 22, c. omnes. See in same dist. c. Constantin.; C. of Chalcedon, in ep. ad Leonem.

rites, offers up with consecrated hands for the first time in holy Mass the spotless Victim of Calvary.) The terms "priest" and "sacrifice" are inseparable. For though "the law maketh men priests, who have infirmity," yet "every high priest taken from among men, is ordained . . . that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices" (Heb. vii. 28; v. 1). Priest and sacrifice are thus correlative terms, like king and kingdom, husband and wife. The Sacrament of Holy Orders, in all its steps, implies sacrifice, or the discharge of some function bearing on sacrifice. To form sacrificing priests, therefore, was Christ's purpose in the institution of this Sacrament. The episcopate is but an extension of the priesthood, conveying the power of propagating, or carrying down, the priestly office; the lower orders are but grades of the priestly office, or, rather, steps leading to it.

I. To understand thoroughly the Sacrament of Holy Orders, given for the perpetuation of the priesthood, we must grasp well the idea of sacrifice, the main function of the priest. His office is to stand between the people and God, offering "gifts and sacrifice." There is a sense, no doubt, in which all Christians, just as formerly all Jews, were said to be priests, offering up the great inward sacrifice of prayer, and praise, and self-surrender to almighty God; but this does not touch the question of the outward, public, visible worship, that men, as a body, felt ever bound to offer to God. Now, the main, central, and highest form of this public cult has always been some kind of sacrifice. All religions, true or false, offered sacrifice, and gradually there grew up among them a body of men set apart to offer it. It is the abuse, not the use, of sacrifice we condemn, both in Jew and Gentile. Of course, the inward worship of the heart is ever binding; but this only accentuates the need of outward, joint worship on the part of society at large, ever expressing itself in offering, i.e., *sacrificing*, some outward thing,—fruits, flowers, or animals. These offerings were consumed or destroyed, or equivalently so, in order to bear witness to God's supreme dominion over all things. Live victims were slain, to show that God was master of life and death. The offering was ever made to God, or some one reputed as such. Hence, sacrifice is the *highest* form of religious rite, and differs essentially from other and secondary acts

of Divine worship. It cannot, without *idolatry,* be offered to a creature. To make this offering duly and worthily, a priesthood has been established. With us this is done by the sacramental rite of Holy Orders. A priest is not one merely chosen to read public prayers, or preach, or take a leading part in local good works. No sacramental symbol is required to enable a man to discharge these offices. The main function of the priest is to sacrifice; and, in the New Law, to absolve from sin. Divine service is not necessarily Divine sacrifice. The rite of sacrifice, as essential, indeed the main central act of worship, can never perish from the earth, nor a priesthood to offer it. Forms, rites, and ceremonies may change — not the priestly offering. The abrogation of the sacrifices of the Old Law was only the introduction of the one majestic sacrifice of the New, still carried on in the Mass, and offered daily by the new priesthood from the rising to the setting sun. There is, and was, only one sacrifice worthy of God, and adequate to atone for sin — that of Christ on Calvary. That one sacrifice is still offered in an unbloody manner in the Mass by the visible priesthood, representing and sharing in the power of our one invisible High Priest, Christ. Mystic powers are conveyed in Holy Orders, the chief of which is the perpetuation of the sacrifice of the Cross: "Do this for a commemoration of me." This command to sacrifice, i.e., offer Christ's precious Body and Blood, the Church faithfully carries out through her priests. The Victim is the same, the priest the same, — Jesus Christ speaking through His priests; the manner only differs. The Mass is the Sun of Divine worship. It sums up in solemn splendor and spiritual beauty all other outward forms of sacrifice. We may say, in a reverent sense, that the Old and the New Law survive in the Mass. Nature, in the form of grape and wheat, all that men can bring in the way of art, and wealth, and taste, flowers, and music, and, on occasions, majestic rites, are embodied in the great Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Mass. All men's gifts to God circle round the altar, or are collected in the church, where holy Mass is offered by the priest, "first for his own sins, and then for the people's" (Heb. vii. 27). The Mass is the one changeless Sacrifice of the Cross, offered up all the world over, for the quick and the dead.

For carrying on such a sacrifice a worthy priesthood must be provided, and this is effected by the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The priesthood of the Old Law came down by natural family descent from Aaron, the high priest; but the priesthood of the New Law comes down from Christ in the powers transmitted through Holy Orders. Apostolicity, i.e., the carrying on the mission entrusted to the apostles by Christ, is a note of the true Church, resting on the unbroken succession of her orders. Ordination, i.e., Holy Orders, transmits the main features and powers of Christ. Now, He was "a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech," who offered, as you may remember, bread and wine, the matter of the Sacrifice of the Mass. "As my Father hath sent me, so I send you." This transmission of Divine authority exists in the priest. He is sent by the apostles, still living in the bishops, who still "ordain priests in every church," and thus continue to give "some apostles, . . . some pastors . . . for the work of the ministry" (Eph. iv. 11, 12), and see that none "assume this honor save those who are 'called by God, as Aaron was'" (Heb. v. 4).

God works in us ministerially, in grace as in nature. He sends His gifts, temporal and spiritual, through others. Priests are, in St. Paul's words, "the dispensers of the mysteries of God." They thus guard and administer the channels of grace. We may say, therefore, with truth, that Holy Orders is the fountain of spiritual life in the Church. Without Holy Orders the world, spiritually, would be a barren wilderness. It would lie under perpetual interdict.

The city of God, alive to-day with the hum of prayer and praise and sacrifice, would be, without Holy Orders, like a city of the dead, as silent and lifeless as the grave. So pressing is the need of a priesthood that where the churches are closed or desecrated, and the true priests slain or driven away, they get soon reopened; and if the altar and true sacrifice are not restored, they are replaced by a table or reading-desk, and a sham clergy put in to take the place of real sacrificing priests. If men cease to worship the true God by the one true sacrifice, through the one true priesthood, they take to themselves false ones. Divine worship of some sort is a social need.

Hence, the devil's best weapon in his war with Christ is the removal or corruption of the clergy, the drying up, in fact, or poisoning, the wells of Holy Orders. All the great persecutors, from Nero downwards, have mainly aimed their death-blows at the heads of the clergy. "Scatter the shepherds, and the flocks will be dispersed," is their motto.

It was to His priests our Lord said, "You are the salt of the earth," adding, significantly, "What, if the salt be corrupted," meaning, that no greater curse or blight can fall on the Church than a corrupt or faithless priesthood. Hence the anxiety, ever shown by her for the training, selection, and reforming of her clergy. Thank God, in spite of local and individual scandals, the Catholic priesthood has ever, as a whole, lived up to its ideal, and under all circumstances called mankind, both by preaching and example, to a lofty standard of truth and righteousness. Let slanderers say what they will, the proportion of bad or imperfect priests never exceeded, if it ever even came up to, that of those who were present with Christ Himself at the first Eucharistic banquet. Indeed, the Catholic priesthood has ever shown marked powers of self-recovery and readjustment to changed social and political conditions. It flourishes under and survives every régime. While forms of government perish, never to rise again, one bad harvest, so to say, among the clergy is followed, as in nature, by better ones. There is ever "a second spring" in progress somewhere among them. *Digitus Dei est hic*, "The finger of God is here; and it is wonderful to our eyes."

The secret, in reality, lies in the mystic rite of Holy Orders, the Sacrament, "by which," to use the words of the Catechism, "priests and other ministers of the Church are ordained, and receive *power* and *grace* to perform their sacred duties."

The preparation required for this Sacrament and the ritual accompanying its bestowal are most searching and impressive. The young Levite who officiates before you to-day has had to undergo many long years of trial and training ere being deemed worthy to enter the priesthood. Before admission even as a candidate for Holy Orders, searching inquiries were made as to his fitness for the priesthood, physically, morally, and intellectually. Though democratic in manning her clergy from every rank and class of

the community, yet does the Church require fulness and integrity of life. The pure, spotless sacrifice demands this in those who represent "Christ our High Priest." Hence, to be blind, lame, deaf, or notably deformed physically, is a bar to holy orders. And the same may be said of those morally and intellectually defective.

II. As a prelude to Holy Orders he received the tonsure, i.e., his hair was cut in the form of a crown, to denote his abandoning worldly dignities and pursuits and entering the clerical state. Not that he is thereby cut off from the people, but merely reminded of his duty to be in a special manner a man of God. Pleasures, amusements, and pursuits permissible to the laity are forbidden to one who thus dedicates himself exclusively to the service of God and His people.

After years of study and training he reached the summit of Holy Orders, the priesthood, by a ladder of seven steps, beginning with the four minor orders of *doorkeeper, lector, exorcist, acolyte,* and terminating with the three major orders of *subdiaconate, diaconate,* and *priesthood.* All these grades enable the recipients to discharge certain functions having a near or remote bearing on the great Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Mass. They are not separate sacraments, but branches or parts of the one Sacrament of Orders. Indeed, it is questionable whether any but the priesthood and diaconate are fully sacramental at all. Each and all of these seven orders open up and suggest many interesting, historical, and liturgical questions, but I limit my observations to the priesthood, the sun and centre around which all revolve. All converge in preparing those who receive them to be "sacrificing priests."

Two great powers with corresponding grace to use them are conveyed in ordination: the first, over the real and natural body of Christ in *Consecration;* the second, over the mystical body of Christ, the Church, in *Absolution,* or the forgiveness of sin. The granting of these powers, inherent in the Sacrament, is accompanied by all the pomp, impressiveness, and splendor to be found only in Catholic ritual. Each ceremony is a lesson and a prayer. The instruments of sacrifice and the Book of the Gospels, solemnly handed over with accompanying prayers, convey a solemn

message to ear, and mind, and heart. The most impressive moment of all is the laying on of hands, with prayer, by the bishop, forming an essential element of the sacramental rite. The same tremendous power bestowed by Christ on the apostles of changing, in His name and person, bread and wine into His Body and Blood, is conferred on him. Christ has said to him, as to the apostles at the last supper, when He wished to perpetuate the gift of the Eucharist, "Do this for a commemoration of me," viz., what He had done, when, "taking bread, he gave thanks, and brake; and gave to them, saying: 'This is my body, which is given for you.' . . . In like manner the chalice also, . . . saying: 'This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you'" (Luke xxii. 19, 20).

Moreover, he has received from the same source power of jurisdiction over the mystical body of Christ in being qualified to take his seat in the tribunal of the Confessional and act therein towards the faithful as judge, doctor, and father. "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven," is Christ's commission to all priests for all time. He really and truly is now, in the words of St. Paul, a minister of Christ and dispenser of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. iv. 1).

Besides these two great powers of consecration and absolution the priestly functions involve the administration of the sacraments, except Holy Orders and Confirmation, the instruction of the people in faith and conduct, as well as consoling, visiting, and otherwise helping the sick and dying. It is his to bless, preach, and rule in the name and power of his divine Master. But, as everything must be done in order among us, the exercising of these powers and duties is subject to the bishop, "to whom it is given to rule the house of God."

The episcopate, it may be observed, is not a distinct order in itself, but the extension and plenitude of the priesthood. As successors of the apostles and rulers of the Church it is one of their main functions to administer the Sacrament of Holy Orders, thus perpetuating the priesthood and carrying on the kingdom of God. "They [the apostles, or first bishops] ordained . . . priests in every church" (Acts xiv. 22). "I left thee," says St. Paul to Titus, whom he had consecrated bishop, "that thou

shouldest . . . ordain priests in every city" (Tit. i. 5). Their power to teach the faithful and the clergy, to guard morals and disciplines, and generally to legislate for and administer their dioceses, does not spring from Holy Orders, but is a sharing in the supreme jurisdiction granted to Peter, to whom is given main care of Christ's flock.

Neither bishop nor priest, be it observed, is a mere delegate or chosen representative of the community. Whatsoever the mode of election in times present and past, the powers of the priesthood spring from their Orders. Ordination is not a *civil,* but *sacramental,* rite. It is of *Divine,* not *human,* institution. The grace comes from above, not from below. "Man imposes the hand," says St. Ambrose, "God gives the grace." The powers and essential privileges of the priesthood are the continuation and application of those of Christ.

Our Lord promised to be with His Church till the end of the World. He is present everywhere as God, and as man holds secret and silent court in the Blessed Sacrament. But He is therein immovable and invisible, revealing Himself only to the eye of faith. Further, however, He is *visibly* and *tangibly,* though *ministerially,* present in His priesthood. They reflect Him in their lives; they, like Him, "go about doing good." Their mission is to mirror Christ to the people. He was, and is, king, priest, and prophet; and their respective functions are discharged by Him not visibly, nor in person, but through the clergy, ministering to our spiritual needs in the pulpit, the confessional, and, above all, at the altar.

The royalty of Christ is shown in Church authority, from the Pope down to our own immediate pastors. His office as prophet comes home to us in the teaching office of holy Church, while His priesthood is daily exercised in our behalf in holy Mass.

It is significant that Holy Orders is one of the three Sacraments that impress an indelible seal or mark on the soul, called character. It implies a special consecration to Almighty God, and is a reminder that the person thus sealed or marked should walk worthy of the character he bears, either as a *child,* a *soldier,* and, above all, a *priest,* of the true God. This hall-mark of the soul impressed in ordination is never lost. Once a priest, a priest

forever, whether he tread in the footsteps of John and Augustine, or of Judas and Arius.

In the familiar sense of the term, character is the sum of qualities, good or bad, that combine to distinguish one person or thing from another. Life is the building up of character, the fixing of one's habits. Though free, yet we know that men will ever act up to their character or fixed ways. Among Christians, notwithstanding the endless diversity of character, there is one point in which all must meet — the imitation of Christ. For the Church, our Mother, is ever in labor, "till Christ be formed in us." The true priest, like the true Christian, is he who in life and character truly lives and reproduces his divine Master. The training, the schooling, the ideals of the priesthood, have all one end in view — the building up of Christ in the soul. Swerving from "Jesus Christ, and him crucified," in action or demeanor, seems a flaw in the sacerdotal character. It is a dimming and darkening of the hall-mark of ordination. Hence the outcry and gross exaggerations ever attending a scandal among the clergy. The very obloquy, criticism, and slander to which they are so unfairly exposed, spring from the perfection and height of their professed aims and ideals in "living Christ." The highest patterns of priestly life must, in the nature of things, fall infinitely short of this. Christ, the ideal man, like ideal beauty in art, is ever out of reach, ever receding to the skies, as we climb higher and higher the mountain of perfection; yet He is the model, the one standard for all, but particularly for the priest. And indeed every true priest as he stands at the altar, sits in the confessional, or goes in search of the lost sheep in the wild wastes of life, must feel it specially incumbent in him to follow the Master, even though painfully conscious of his manifold unworthiness.

Withal, the hostile world may be challenged to deny that any body of men ever imitated Christ better than the clergy, secular and regular, of the Catholic Church. History justifies their claim to be ever, in Christ's words, "the salt of the earth."

Pray, then, for the young Levite who says his first Mass to-day, that the grace of Holy Orders planted in his soul may bear fruit abundantly, and ever aid him in his high and arduous office. Pray the Lord of the vineyard, that He may send laborers into

His vineyard, men "powerful in work and word"; men with wills of steel and hearts of gold, men of light and leading, trained like St Paul in the best of all schools, that of "Christ and him crucified." Pray for him and all, remembering that they carry the great grace and responsibilities of Holy Orders, "in vessels of clay." And while availing yourselves of their ministrations in the great work of saving your souls, do not fail to thank God, "Who hath given such power to men."

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THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

SUBJECT

LIFE EVERLASTING

TEXT

I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you. — JOHN xvi. 22.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. Our Lord spoke the words of our text just before He entered upon His passion. He knew that on account of His imminent sufferings, His death, and all the subsequent persecutions that would follow, His disciples would be filled with sorrow and sadness; and in order to hearten them, and to strengthen them for their coming trials and grief, He consoled them by the promise that He would meet them again, that after the "little while" of the present life, when their sorrows would be over, He would greet them, and their joy no man should take from them.

I. The meaning of this Article of the Creed. 1. The words "life everlasting" signify that the happiness of the blessed does not consist in corporal or transitory things, but in things spiritual and eternal. 2. The happiness of "life everlasting" is beyond the power of our earthly words to express. It implies two things, namely, exemption from all evils, such as sickness, death, etc. (Apoc. xxi. 4), and the possession of all good. 3. The positive happiness of heaven is twofold, — essential and accessory.

II. The essential happiness of heaven consists in the vision of God, in seeing God face to face as He is. 1. This beatitude conveys the idea of knowledge of the Supreme Truth from whom all other truths are derived, and possession of the Supreme Good who is the source of all we love. 2. In knowing God we shall know all else that we desire to know. 3. From the beatific vision will result an estatic love that will completely fill our heart's capacity.

III. The accessory happiness of heaven consists: 1. In the glory which the blessed will have from God and from their fellow saints. 2. In the perfections of their minds and bodies, and in their celestial dwelling. 3. In the certainty which the blessed have that their happiness is unending. 4. In the fact that they never experience satiety or weariness.

Conclusion. 1. Life everlasting should be the ruling influence of our thoughts and actions. All else in life should be subordinated to our future lasting happiness and we should make use of every means in our power to attain it. 2. The thought of future glory is a consolation in sorrow.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article XII of the Creed

Life everlasting

WHY THIS IS THE LAST ARTICLE OF THE CREED

The wisdom of the Apostles, our guides in religion, suggested to them the propriety of giving this Article the last place in the

Creed, which is the summary of our faith: first, because after the resurrection of the body the only object of the Christian's hope is the reward of everlasting life; and secondly, in order that perfect happiness, embracing as it does the fulness of all good, may be ever present to our minds and absorb all our thoughts and affections. In his instructions to the faithful the pastor, therefore, will unceasingly endeavor to light up in their souls an ardent desire of the promised rewards of eternal life, that thus they may look upon as light, or even agreeable, whatever difficulties they may experience in the practice of religion, and may yield a more willing and an entire obedience to God.

MEANING OF THIS ARTICLE

But as many mysteries lie concealed under the words which are here used to declare the happiness reserved for us, they are to be explained in such a manner as to make them intelligible to all, as far as their respective capacities will allow. The faithful, therefore, are to be informed that the words "life everlasting" signify not only that continuity of existence to which the devils and the wicked are consigned, but also that perpetuity of happiness which is to satisfy the desires of the blessed. In this sense they were understood by the ruler mentioned in the Gospel when he asked the Redeemer: "Good master, what shall I do to possess everlasting life?"[1] as if he had said, What shall I do in order to arrive at the enjoyment of everlasting happiness? In this sense they are understood in the sacred volumes, as is clear from a reference to many passages of Scripture.[2] The supreme happiness of the blessed is thus designated, principally to exclude the notion that it consists in corporeal and transitory things, which cannot be everlasting.[3]

WHY CALLED LIFE EVERLASTING

The word "blessedness" is insufficient to express the idea, particularly as there have not been wanting men who, inflated with the vain opinions of a false philosophy, would place the supreme good in sensible things. But these grow old and perish,

[1] Luke xviii. 18. [2] Matt. xix. 29; xxv. 46; Rom. vi. 22.
[3] Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. 19, c. 11.

while supreme happiness is defined by no limits of time. Nay more, so far is the enjoyment of the goods of this life from conferring real happiness that, on the contrary, he who is captivated by a love of the world is farthest removed from true happiness; for it is written: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him."[1] A little farther on we read, "The world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof."[2] The pastor, therefore, will be careful to impress these truths on the minds of the faithful, that they may learn to despise earthly things, and to know that in this world, in which we are not citizens but sojourners,[3] happiness is not to be found. Yet even here below we may be said with truth to be happy in hope, if "denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we . . . live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."[4] Many who seemed to themselves wise,[5] not understanding these things, and imagining that happiness was to be sought in this life, became fools and the victims of the most deplorable calamities.

TRUE HAPPINESS MUST BE EVERLASTING

These words, "life everlasting," also teach us that, contrary to the false notions of some, happiness once attained can never be lost. Happiness is an accumulation of good without admixture of evil, which, as it fills up the measure of man's desires, must be eternal. He who is blessed with its enjoyment must earnestly desire its continuance, and, were it transient and uncertain, would necessarily experience the torture of continual apprehension.[6]

THE HAPPINESS OF THE JUST IS INTENSE AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE

The intensity of the happiness which the just enjoy in their celestial country, and its utter incomprehensibility to all but to

[1] 1 John ii. 15. [2] 1 John ii. 17. [3] 1 Pet. ii. 11.
[4] Tit. ii. 12, 13. [5] Rom. i. 22.
[6] See Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. 12, cap. 20; lib. 22, cc. 29, 30; de libero arbit. cap. 25; de verb. Domini, serm. 64, & serm. 37, de Sanctis.

themselves alone, are sufficiently conveyed by the very words which are here used to express that happiness. When to express any idea we make use of a word common to many things, we do so because we have no proper term by which to express it clearly and fully. When, therefore, to express happiness, words are adopted which are not more applicable to the blessed than to all who are to live for ever, we are led to infer that the idea presents to the mind something too great, too exalted, to be expressed fully by a proper term. True, the happiness of heaven is expressed in Scripture by a variety of other words, such as, the "kingdom of God,"[1] "of Christ,"[2] "of heaven,"[3] "paradise,"[4] "the holy city," "the new Jerusalem,"[5] "my Father's house";[6] yet it is clear that none of these appellations is sufficient to convey an adequate idea of its greatness.

LIFE EVERLASTING IS A POWERFUL INCENTIVE TO VIRTUE

The pastor, therefore, will not neglect the opportunity which this Article affords of inviting the faithful to the practice of piety, of justice, and of all the other virtues, by holding out to them such ample rewards as are announced in the words "life everlasting." Among the blessings which we instinctively desire life is confessedly esteemed one of the greatest: by it principally, when we say "life everlasting," do we express the happiness of the just. If, then, during this short and chequered period of our existence, which is subject to so many and such various vicissitudes that it may be called death rather than life, there is nothing to which we so fondly cling, nothing which we love so dearly as life; with what ardor of soul, with what earnestness of purpose, should we not seek that eternal happiness which, without alloy of any sort, presents to us the pure and unmixed enjoyment of every good? The happiness of eternal life is, as defined by the Fathers, "an exemption from all evil, and an enjoyment of all good."[7] That it is an exemption from all evil the Scriptures declare in the most explicit terms. "They shall

[1] Acts xiv. 22.
[2] 2 Pet. i. 11.
[3] Matt. v. 3, 20.
[4] Luke xxiii. 43.
[5] Apoc. xxi. 10; iii. 12.
[6] John xiv. 2.
[7] Chrysost. in 30, cap. ad Theod. lapsum; Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. 22, cap. 30; Anselm, epist. 2, & de similit. c. 47, seq.

no more hunger nor thirst," says St. John, "neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat";[1] and again, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away."[2] But the glory of the blessed shall be without measure, and their solid joys and pleasures without number. The mind is incapable of comprehending or conceiving the greatness of this glory: it can be known only by its fruition, that is, by entering into the joy of the Lord, and thus satisfying fully the desires of the human heart. Although, as St. Augustine observes, it would seem easier to enumerate the evils from which we shall be exempt than the goods and the pleasures which we shall enjoy;[3] yet we must endeavor to explain, briefly and clearly, these things which are calculated to inflame the faithful with a desire of arriving at the enjoyment of this supreme felicity.

HAPPINESS TWOFOLD, — ESSENTIAL AND ACCESSORY

Before we proceed to this explanation we shall make use of a distinction which has been sanctioned by the most eminent writers on religion; it is, that there are two sorts of goods, one an ingredient, another an accompaniment of happiness. The former, therefore, for the sake of perspicuity, they have called essential; the latter, accessory. Solid happiness, which we may designate by the common appellation, "essential," consists in the vision of God, and the enjoyment of His eternal beauty who is the source and principle of all goodness and perfection. "This," says our Lord, "is eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."[4] These sentiments St. John seems to interpret when he says: "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like to him: because we shall see him as he is."[5] These words inform us that the happiness of heaven consists of two things: to see God such as He is in His own nature and substance, and to be made like unto Him.

[1] Apoc. vii. 16. [2] Apoc. xxi. 4.
[3] Serm. vi. 4, de verb. Domini & de Symb. ad Catech. lib. 3.
[4] John xvii. 3. [5] 1 John iii. 2.

EFFECT OF THE BEATIFIC VISION ON THE BLESSED

Those who enjoy the beatific vision, while they retain their own nature, assume a certain admirable and almost divine form, so as to seem gods rather than men. Why they assume this form becomes at once intelligible if we only reflect that a thing is known either from its essence, or from its image and appearance; but as nothing resembles God so as to afford by that resemblance a perfect knowledge of Him, no creature can behold His divine nature and essence unless admitted by the Deity to a sort of union with Himself, according to these words of St. Paul: "We now see through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face."[1] The words "in a dark manner" St. Augustine understands to mean that we see Him in a resemblance calculated to convey to us some faint notion of the Deity.[2] This, St. Denis clearly shows when he says[3] that the things above cannot be known by comparison with the things below; for the essence and substance of anything incorporeal cannot be known through the image of that which is corporeal, particularly as a resemblance must be less gross and more spiritual than that which it represents, as we know from universal experience. Since, therefore, we can find nothing created equally pure and spiritual with God, no resemblance can enable us perfectly to comprehend the divine essence.

Moreover, all created things are circumscribed within certain limits of perfection; but God is circumscribed by no limits, and therefore nothing created can reflect His immensity. The only means, therefore, of arriving at a knowledge of the divine essence is that God unite Himself in some sort to us, and after an incomprehensible manner elevate our minds to a higher degree of perfection, and thus render us capable of contemplating the beauty of His nature. This the light of His glory will accomplish; illumined by its splendor we shall see God, the true light, in His own light.[4]

The blessed always see God present, and by this greatest and most exalted of gifts, being made "partakers of the divine na-

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.
[2] Aug. lib. 15, de Civ. Dei, c. 9.
[3] De divin. nom. c. 1.
[4] Ps. xxxv. 10.

ture,"[1] they enjoy true and solid happiness. Our belief of this truth should therefore be animated by an assured hope of one day arriving, through the divine goodness, at the same happy goal, according to these words of the Nicene Creed: "I expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." These are divine truths which defy the powers of human language and mock the limits of human comprehension.

We may, however, trace some resemblance of this happy change in sensible objects, for as iron when acted on by fire becomes ignited, and while it is substantially the same seems changed into fire, which is a different substance, so the blessed, who are admitted into the glory of heaven and who burn with a love of God, although they cease not to be the same, are yet affected in such a manner as that they may be said with truth to differ more from the inhabitants of this earth than iron when ignited differs from itself when cold.

IN WHAT ESSENTIAL HAPPINESS CONSISTS

To say all in a few words: Supreme and absolute happiness, which we call essential, consists in the possession of God; for what can *he* lack to consummate his happiness who possesses God, the fountain of all good, the fulness of all perfection?

THE ACCESSORIES OF HAPPINESS

To this happiness, however, are appended certain gifts which are common to all the blessed, and which, because more within the reach of human comprehension, are generally found more effectual in exciting the mind and inflaming the heart.[2] These the Apostle seems to have in view when, in his epistle to the Romans, he says: "Glory, and honor, and peace to every one that worketh good."[3] The blessed shall enjoy glory; not only that glory which we have already shown to constitute essential happiness, or to be its inseparable accompaniment, but also that glory which consists in the clear and comprehensive knowledge which each of the blessed shall have of the singular and exalted dignity of his companions in glory.

[1] 2 Pet. i. 4.
[2] Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. xxii. c. 30.
[3] Rom. ii. 10.

But how distinguished must not that honor be which is conferred by God Himself, who no longer calls them servants, but friends,[1] brethren,[2] and sons of God![3] Hence the Redeemer will address His elect in these words, which at once breathe infinite love and bespeak the highest honor: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you."[4] Justly, then, may we exclaim with the psalmist: "Thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honorable."[5] They shall also receive the highest praise from Christ the Lord, in presence of His Heavenly Father, and before the assembled hosts of heaven.

And if nature has interwoven in the human heart the desire of honor, particularly when conferred by men eminent for wisdom, who are the most authoritative vouchers of merit, what an accession of glory to the blessed, to evince towards each other the highest veneration!

To enumerate all the delights with which the souls of the blessed shall be inebriated would be an endless task. We cannot even conceive them in idea. With this truth, however, the minds of the faithful should be deeply impressed: that the happiness of the saints is full to overflowing of all those pleasures which can be enjoyed or even desired in this life, whether they regard the powers of the mind or the perfection of the body,—a consummation more exalted in the manner of its accomplishment than, to use the Apostle's words, eye hath seen, ear heard, or the heart of man conceived.[6]

The body, which was before gross and material, having put off mortality and now become refined and spiritualized, shall no longer stand in need of corporal nutriment: while the soul shall be satiated with that eternal food of glory which the master of that great feast will minister in person, to all.[7]

Who will desire rich apparel or royal robes, where these appendages of human grandeur shall be superseded; and all shall be clothed with immortality and splendor, and adorned with a crown of imperishable glory?

And if the possession of a spacious and magnificent mansion forms an ingredient in human happiness, what more spacious,

[1] John xv. 14. [2] Matt. xii. 49. [3] Rom. viii. 15, 16. [4] Matt. xxv. 34.
[5] Ps. cxxxviii. 17. [6] 1 Cor. ii. 9. [7] Luke xii. 37.

what more magnificent, can imagination picture than the mansion of heaven, illumined as it is throughout with the blaze of glory which encircles the Godhead! Hence the prophet, contemplating the beauty of this dwelling-place, and burning with the desire of reaching those mansions of bliss, exclaims: "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God."[1] That the faithful may be all filled with the same sentiments and utter the same language should be the object of the pastor's most earnest desires, as it should be of his zealous labors. "In my Father's house," says our Lord, "there are many mansions,"[2] in which shall be distributed rewards of greater and of less value according to each one's deserts; for "he who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings."[3]

HOW TO ARRIVE AT THE ENJOYMENT OF THIS HAPPINESS

The pastor, therefore, will not only move the faithful to a desire of arriving at this happiness, but will frequently remind them that infallibly to attain it they must possess the virtues of faith and charity; they must persevere in the exercise of prayer and the salutary use of the sacraments, and in a faithful discharge of all the good offices which spring from fraternal charity. Thus, through the mercy of God, who has prepared that blessed glory for those who serve Him, shall be one day fulfilled the words of the prophet: "My people shall sit in the beauty of peace, and in the tabernacle of confidence, and in wealthy rest."[4]

Sermons

Heaven

BY THE REV. BERTRAND L. CONWAY, C.S.P.

The Word of God, in both the Old Testament and the New, speaks unceasingly of the perfect and lasting happiness which God has prepared for His faithful servants. The joys of the kingdom of heaven are insisted upon by prophet, apostle, and the

[1] Ps. lxxxiii. 1, 2.
[2] John xiv. 2.
[3] 2 Cor. ix. 6.
[4] Is. xxxii. 18.

Saviour Himself, to comfort us in our struggles and sorrows, to remind us of the brief duration of our earthly pilgrimage, to incite us to persevere faithfully until the end, that we might win our reward exceedingly great. "I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come" (Rom. viii. 18). "We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come" (Heb. xiii. 14). "Be thou faithful until death: and I will give thee the crown of life" (Apoc. ii. 10). "Your reward is very great in heaven" (Matt. v. 12). "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure" (Ps. xxxv. 10).

It is impossible for any mortal to describe adequately the happiness of heaven. The apostles on Thabor who saw the Saviour transfigured with the glory of His Father's kingdom "fell upon their face, and were very much afraid" (Matt. xvii. 6). St. Paul, the greatest genius the religious world ever knew, although vouchsafed a vision of paradise, could only marvel at its beauty and be silent (2 Cor. xii. 4). He knew that its happiness far surpassed the dreams of the brightest intelligence, or the hopes of the most loving heart. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. ii. 9). St. John the Beloved pictures heaven with its gates of pearl, its streets of pure gold, its foundations of all precious stones, its light of the glory of God (Apoc. xxi. 19–23), and yet his imagery in no way pretends to give a real account of the beauty of God's house.

When the greatest of God's saints tell us clearly that God has not chosen to reveal to us the details of our future life and work in eternity, it is idle for us to pry into the secrets of God. We cannot know any more than God is pleased to unfold.

We should be perfectly content when the apostle tells us, "It hath not yet appeared what we shall be." How we shall know God and love Him for all eternity, how we will carry on converse with the angels and the saints, how we will feel towards our friends or relatives who have not won their crown, how we shall be perfectly and eternally happy — these are questions for the future. We are like men regarding the reverse side of a beautiful tapestry and seeing nothing but an unmeaning medley of

numberless stitches and knots. But we know that if we are faithful to the end, we will one day behold the beautiful design, of God's own framing, on the other side of the fabric.

But as in every other mystery of Christianity, the hereafter, with its obscurity and darkness, is also a revelation of truth and light. As St. John tells us: In heaven we shall see God face to face, and be like to him.

The essential joy of the blessed in heaven consists in seeing God face to face and loving Him perfectly through all eternity — in enjoying with the purest and most perfect happiness the Beatific Vision. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God" (Matth. v. 8). "We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face" (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

Human reason of itself can prove the sanction of reward and punishment in the after life. It can demonstrate that the soul does not end with the body, but lives an immortal life of blessing or of curse, according as it has kept or broken the law of God. But the revealed joy of the Beatific Vision is far above the happiness due our human nature. It is a purely supernatural gift of God. Eternal life, says the apostle, is a grace of God (Rom. vi. 23). It makes us "fellow citizens with the saints, . . . domestics of God," "joint heirs with Christ," sharers in the glory of his throne, his eternal friends (Eph. ii. 19; Rom. viii. 17; Apoc. iii. 21; John xiv. 2). No truth is plainer in the Scriptures than the invisibility of the Uncreated Deity. We have no right by our mere human nature to see God face to face. "No man hath seen God at any time" (John i. 18). God "inhabiteth light inaccessible, whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. vi. 16). When Moses of old desired to see the glory of God, Jehovah told him that to see God face to face was not given to man in this life. "Thou canst not see my face: for no man shall see me and live" (Ex. xxxiii. 20. Compare Deut. iv. 12; 1 John iv. 12).

St. John tells us that to see God there must needs be some marvellous supernatural change in us. If we are to look not merely upon Our Lord's glorified humanity but to view the Divine Essence itself, we must become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4), we must "be like to him" (1 John iii. 2).

This supernatural quality or special divine operation whereby our minds are enlarged, purified, and strengthened to enjoy the glory of the divine nature instead of being overwhelmed by its majesty, is called by the Church the *light of glory*. It is the culminating grace of the thousands that God showers upon His children from the time He first gave them the divine help to believe and to hope. It is the eternal grace of the love of God which will endure for ever, when the faith that acknowledged it and the hope that longed for it shall be no more.

Even in this life we can see everywhere around us the traces of the beauty, the goodness, and the truth of the most high God. How many have realized his *beauty* when they saw the sun rise glorious at dawn from the top of the snow-capped mountains, or descend in ruddy glow tipping the surrounding clouds with all the colors of the rainbow? How many have felt His *goodness* when in their hour of contentment they have thanked Him for the blessing of a true wife, a grateful child, a faithful friend, a sorrowful Confession, a loving Communion? How many have received a glimpse of His eternal *truth* when they entered the haven of the Church Catholic after the storms of error and unbelief, and learned to love the wisdom of God in a St. Paul, a St. John, a Francis de Sales, or a Philip Neri?

And yet these were only "glimpses through a glass," as the apostle calls them. They were merely the glimmering rays of beauty, goodness, and truth which shone from on high through the thick mists of this world's error and sin.

In the kingdom of heaven we shall no longer see Him by means of His word and works, as revealed in the universe, the Bible, the Church and the saints, but we shall gaze into the Divine Essence itself, and see, as in a spotless mirror, created things, and the eternal truths. We will begin to fathom — and all eternity will not suffice for the task — the impenetrable depths of the mysteries of God — the trinity, the incarnation, the redemption, the love, the mercy, the justice, the power, the eternity of God. We shall then learn the reason of suffering and labor, we shall realize the mercy of eternal punishment, we shall see the wisdom of the marvellous distribution of God's graces — in a word, we shall be happy in viewing all things from the viewpoint of God.

Some non-Catholic writers have ridiculed what they call the scholastic concept of heaven. Just as Mohammed, they say, pictured a sensual paradise, or the pagans framed gods after their own image and likeness, so the medieval schoolmen, addicted wholly to contemplation, made the happiness of heaven consist solely in the joy of intellectual contemplation.

But such an objection at once proves that these men have never taken the trouble to read any of the authors they despise on mere traditional prejudice. For Catholic theologians of the Middle Ages and to-day point out carefully that the Beatific Vision implies not merely the perfect satisfaction of the intellect, but also the perfect satisfaction of the will; not merely the perfection of the soul, which becomes like to God, but also of the body, which becomes like the body of the risen Christ (1 Cor. xv.); not merely a dry thinking about God, but the perfect possession of God for all eternity by every faculty of man.

What do we mean by *seeing* a friend? We go to see him because we love him and enjoy the pleasure of his company. Should that love turn to hatred, his very presence becomes distasteful and a positive pain to us. So the devout soul sees God because it loves God perfectly, and finds its perfect contentment in His eternally blessed presence. For the same reason the unrepentant sinner, dying in the voluntary hatred of God, finds God's presence a positive pain, and shuns it forever in the despair of hell.

The soul possessed of the Beatific Vision is necessarily blessed with a perfect and eternal happiness.

There is an innate longing in every soul for happiness, because God has created it for Himself. Too often man seeks it where it cannot be found. In seeking to build his palace of happiness, he generally lays the foundation in the riches of the world, which seem at first sight able to procure every desire of the human heart. On this foundation he erects every kind of sensual and intellectual pleasure; love, friendship, health, the pride of place, the glory of this world, the honor and respect of his fellows. Has he attained true happiness? By no means, for in one day the whirlwind of misfortune overturns his palace of pleasure and buries him in its ruins.

Has he acquired a fortune of millions? He is robbed of it in

one day's wild speculation, or his health is so shattered that his life is nothing but a living death. Has he a happy and peaceful family? In one day the devil enters that household, and lo! a loving wife becomes untrue, a daughter marries a worthless scoundrel, or a son becomes a drunkard. Has he many friends? In time of need they desert him and sell his friendship, like Judas, for thirty pieces of silver. Is he honored by the world with its highest places of trust? One false step, and those that yesterday shouted their hosannas will be the first to clamor for his undoing.

Indeed every new desire of the heart that is satisfied is merely the beginning of another that craves satisfaction. We are like the traveller that for the first time attempts to climb the summit of a very high mountain. After great stress of labor he has reached a rugged height only to find himself encased in a prison of great walls. On and on he goes to what he deems the topmost peak, but on reaching it he finds that there are others higher still. Down again he climbs to ascend once more, only to be again deceived. What a true picture of the lives of men!

In heaven every true desire shall find its perfect satisfaction, and every evil shall cease to exist forevermore. There will be perfect rest and peace for body and soul. The poor "shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat" (Apoc. vii. 16). The sick and sorrowing shall be strong and happy, for "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more" (Apoc. xxi. 4). The curse of sin and the dark night of struggle and temptation shall disappear, for "there shall be no curse any more, and night shall be no more" (Apoc. xxii. 3–5). The devil's power will be utterly broken, the flesh will no longer rebel against the spirit, the world of wicked men and women will be utterly forgotten.

How often did the eyes of the martyrs dying for Christ in the midst of most cruel torments pierce behind the veil, to take comfort in the peace of the City of God! How often have the noblest of the saints been wrapped in ecstasy as they beheld "the glory of the Lord with open face" (2 Cor. iii. 18)! How often a weary pilgrim in this valley of tears has struggled on despite the bitterest temptations towards the rest of his father's house!

"One drop of this happiness," a great saint tells us, "if it fell into hell, would at once convert the misery of the damned into joy and delight." "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee for ever and ever" (Ps. lxxxiii. 5). "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure. For with thee is the fountain of life; and in thy light we shall see light" (Ps. xxxv. 9, 10).

It is, however, the teaching of the Council of Florence that although all the blessed shall be perfectly happy, still every one shall be rewarded according to their degree of merit. Nothing is more clearly taught in the Sacred Scriptures. Our Saviour tells us that He will "render to every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27). It seems natural to suppose that the saint who practises the heroic self-denial of a St. Paul, or the heroic poverty of St. Francis Assisi, will obtain more glory before the throne of God than that simple good housewife who saves her soul after yielding many and many a time to worldliness. "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings" (2 Cor. ix. 6).

Protestants as a rule deny this, on account of their false teaching on merit and the efficacy of good works. They also appeal to the parable of the householder (Matt. xx. 1–16). But Our Saviour merely wished to bring out the fact "that the reward of eternal life corresponds not to the length of time a man has labored, but to the work he has accomplished" (Maldonatus). Our Saviour had in mind the Jews, who, proud of their position as God's chosen people, were murmuring now that He was putting the alien Gentiles on the same footing as themselves. The question of the quality or inequality of reward in an after life is not even hinted at.

Another common difficulty of to-day is the doubt that seems to arise even in the minds of some Christians: Will not the joys of heaven be fruitful of languor and ennui? They picture the blessed as immersed in mere dreamy contemplation, or chanting in dull monotonous round the praises of God.

But is it not altogether unreasonable to suppose that the Infinite Intelligence, Beauty and Love, could fail to satisfy the aspira-

tions and longings of our minds and hearts? As well say that we could exhaust the ocean by drinking its waters as dream of exhausting the treasures of eternal happiness that God has prepared for us.

It is perfectly true that pleasure produces satiety in this life, but that can readily be accounted for. Sinful pleasure eventually causes disgust and ennui, for our hearts were made for something higher and nobler; intellectual pleasure is often so exacting in its demands that it wearies us exceedingly, just as the body becomes fatigued from too much physical exercise.

But in heaven no unhappiness is possible, because sin, the origin of it, is absolutely banished. "There shall not enter into it anything defiled" (Apoc. xxi. 27). No weariness or ennui is possible, because God gives us the sustaining help of His own infinite power and love. All the desires of mind and will and heart will be eternally gratified. Why then question, simply because we cannot form an adequate concept of the manner in which God will satisfy them?

Sursum Corda be your motto, then, beloved brethren. Lift up your hearts to the glory and happiness that await you in the palace of the King. The true lover thinks constantly of the beloved. It was the thought of the plenty in his father's house that first roused the prodigal to a sense of his degradation. It was the vision of paradise that changed Saul, the persecutor of the Christians, into Paul, the great lover of Jesus Christ.

The true lover longs ardently for the presence of the beloved: "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after thee, O God" (Ps. xli. 1, 2). The desire "to be dissolved" and to be with God (Phil. i. 23) has ever burned in the hearts of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. They knew that nothing but God could give true rest and peace to their souls; that their longing for truth, goodness, beauty, and love was too intense to be satisfied by aught created; that this life was but an imperfect, humdrum existence, unless its motive was divinized by the glory of the life to come. Death to God's true servants is merely a door into their Father's house, a gate into the King's city. Sickness, sorrow, and labor are merely the passports for entrance.

The true lover is willing to do all things for the beloved. The faithful follower of Christ finds every burden easy, because love spurs him on. He knows that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away" (Matt. xi. 12). He knows that the one who hateth his life in the world keepeth it unto life eternal (John xii. 25). He knows that "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 21). No sacrifice is too great, no sorrow too bitter, no labor too trying, no poverty too burdensome, no temptation too vehement — all are gladly accepted as crosses, needed to win the crown incorruptible (1 Cor. ix. 25).

With love as the motive, and the kingdom of God as the end of your striving, let the world's standards alone. Men may pity you for your ill health, look down upon you for your poverty, and avoid you for your over great sorrow, esteeming your life madness, and your death without honor, but God has numbered you among his children, and your lot will be eternal happiness among his saints (Wisdom v. 4, 5).

Heaven

BY CARDINAL CORSI

If even a feeble glimpse of the eternal glory of God, as it manifested itself at the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Thabor, appeared so enchanting to Peter that he at once would give up the world and live forever upon that hallowed mountain, what bliss must it be to behold the full splendor of heaven, to realize its full meaning, to taste its delights, to possess its bliss without fear of ever losing it again! St. Paul assures us that eye hath not seen, neither hath the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him. It is not my intention to describe to you heaven in all its splendor, for it would be impossible for me to do so. In attempting to picture to you the blissful abode of the elect, my words will be quite insufficient to do justice to my subject. I can depict but a feeble image of it, and you must draw your own conclusions as to the immensity and nature of heaven. Suffice it to say, that it is the truest good, the supreme and greatest of all good, be-

cause the glory of heaven consists chiefly in beholding God, in loving and praising Him.

The perfect happiness of the soul, so says St. Augustine, consists in possessing the fulness of its proper desire. This possession engenders peace and satisfaction. In this world we can never be really happy, because either we do not have what we desire, or because we do not desire that which we should desire. As long as we remain in this place of exile, visible creation cannot conduce to our permanent happiness, or to the supreme accomplishment of our perfection; but the moment we pass across the threshold of the heavenly paradise, what blessed purity of the will, what peace to the senses, what jubilant rapture shall we experience! When our intelligence has been enabled to understand the divine mysteries, it will realize how the three Persons constitute the Most Holy Trinity: how the Father generated the Son without being greater than the Son; how the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son without being inferior to them in any sense. It will see the marvellous union of the Divine and human natures in the one Divine Person of Jesus Christ.

The blessed soul will behold in God infinite goodness and beauty, which will fill the soul with infinite delight, admiration, rapture, and love.

Oh, sweet rapture of a blessed, God-loving soul! This soul loves in supreme happiness, with the most ardent love that will ever continue; for by losing all thought of itself it knows of nothing further to desire, nothing to wish, can think of no other good except the One it loves. It loves, but with a perfectly blissful love, because it finds every gratification in the one supreme Good whom it loves. This love, says St. Augustine, is the only air which those inexpressibly blessed souls breathe, the sole substance of their existence. And who could describe it!

When the soul enters paradise it will exclaim: My faith taught that the joys of heaven would be full and complete. But oh, rapture, my expectation could picture only a feeble image, a shadow, of that which I here in reality see and possess! Blessed be those sufferings endured upon earth in resignation to the Divine will! Hallowed be that labor, those penitential works! Blessed in par-

ticular be my most gracious God who purchased this glory for me at the price of His passion, who assisted me with His powerful grace, guided my actions, and granted to my good works their merit!

And this infinite and never-ending bliss is offered to all of us. Yes, dear Christians, you and I can, and should, gain heaven. All that is required is the fulfilling of the conditions under which God has promised it to us. It suffices on our part that we seek it earnestly, that we desire it. It is the reward of the work, the price and the crown of the righteousness, the recompense of the combat.

And now let us consider what we are really doing to merit such a magnificent reward. Alas, the lives of many Christians are little in accord with the law of God. Small are their efforts to attain the crown of the righteous, the salvation for which they were created. Does it not seem that some Christians seem more anxious to damn than to save their souls? Yes, indeed, it is only too true that many Christians live only for the world; they hanker after everything worldly, and think little, if at all, about heaven and eternal glory.

Dear brethren, think seriously upon this: Heaven is the greatest of all good; but man cannot attain it without working for it. Contemplate the awful words of Jesus Christ: "Many are called, but few chosen." Go to work at once, and earnestly, so that you may be counted among the fortunate number of the chosen ones, and merit the glory of heaven by living a righteous and God-fearing life. Amen.

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FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

SUBJECT

THE APOSTOLICITY OF THE CHURCH

TEXT

With whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration. — JAMES i. 17.
[*At that time Jesus said to his disciples:*] *When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth.* — JOHN xvi. 13.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. St. James in to-day's Epistle tells us that God is ever the same, always unchangeable. It is only natural, therefore, that the true Church of God should likewise remain unchanged, in spite of all the vicissitudes of time and place and of every other institution in this world. The secret of this distinctive characteristic of the Church of Christ is the abiding presence in her of that same Spirit of truth and immutability whom our Lord promised to the Apostles in to-day's Gospel.

I. Apostolicity is a mark of the true Church of Christ. 1. Apostolicity means that the Church in every age must be identical with the Church of the Apostles. This identity is manifest in a public, lawful, and unbroken succession of pastors, coming down from the Apostles, maintaining the same doctrines, worship, and government which the Apostles delivered to the Church. 2. The Scriptures tell us that the true Church must be identical with the Church of the Apostles, for Paul says, "though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema" (Gal. i. 8); "and it is built upon the foundations of the apostles" (Eph. ii. 20). This identity in teaching and government in the true Church must be handed down uninterruptedly by a line of legitimate pastors who descend from the Apostles themselves; for "how shall they preach unless they be sent" (Rom. x. 15)?

Thus the priests of Crete received their authority from Titus, and Titus in turn received his from Paul (Titus i. 5). In their disputes with heretics the most ancient Fathers of the Church always appealed to the unbroken succession of pastors in the Church to decide the truth of any doctrine.

II. **The Church of Rome alone is Apostolic.** 1. Her succession of supreme pastors has never failed. Benedict XV traces back an unbroken pedigree through 260 predecessors to St. Peter himself. Their names and lives are handed down in history and can be proved by public documents. The Protestants had their beginning with Luther, sixteen centuries after the Apostles; the Greek schismatics go back to Photius, eight centuries after the Apostles. 2. The Catholic Church has preserved the Sacred Scriptures, and she alone to-day reveres them as the word of God. Of God's oral word or tradition she has been the sole guardian and defender. 3. Thus the Catholic Church only is identical with the Church of the Apostles. This even the adversaries of the Church admit when they accuse her of being always the same and out of date. It was the identity between the Catholic Church of to-day and the Church of the Apostles that brought the great mind of Newman into the true fold.

Conclusion. 1. Gratitude to God for the inestimable privilege and dignity of belonging to the Church of the Apostles. 2. Respect and reverence for the Bishops and priests of the Church, the successors of the Apostles and disciples.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article IX of the Creed

APOSTOLICITY OF THE CHURCH

The true Church is also to be known from her origin, which she derives under the law of grace, from the Apostles; for her doctrines are neither novel nor of recent origin, but were delivered of old by the Apostles, and disseminated throughout the world. Hence, no one can for a moment doubt that the impious

opinions which heresy invents, opposed as they are to the doctrines taught by the Church from the days of the Apostles to the present time, are very different from the faith of the true Church. That all, therefore, may know the true Catholic Church, the Fathers, guided by the Spirit of God, added to the Creed the word "APOSTOLIC";[1] for the Holy Ghost, who presides over the Church, governs her by no other than Apostolic men; and this Spirit, first imparted to the Apostles, has by the infinite goodness of God always continued in the Church. But as this one Church, because governed by the Holy Ghost, cannot err in faith or morals, it necessarily follows that all other societies arrogating to themselves the name of Church, because guided by the spirit of darkness, are sunk in the most pernicious errors, both doctrinal and moral.

Sermons

CATHOLICITY AND APOSTOLIC ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH

BY CARDINAL CORSI

In our preceding instruction we learned that the true Church founded by Jesus Christ must be furnished with four conspicuous characteristics, rendering her easily recognizable, so that all may follow the teaching of Christ and be able to obtain salvation. These distinguishing marks of the true Church are, as we learned, Oneness, Sanctity, Catholicity, and Apostolicity. As to the first two qualities, I have showed how the marks of oneness and sanctity are, without any doubt, possessed by our Church.

The true Church must also be catholic, namely universal. As she is to be for all mankind the sole necessary means for the attainment of salvation, it is necessary that this means should exist at all times in the world and everywhere. Finally, she must be apostolic. For, as Jesus Christ founded His Church upon the apostles, and commissioned them to spread the same in the world, thus Jesus Christ can only acknowledge as His Church that religious community which was established by His apostles at His command. We shall see that also these attributes are found in the Church to which we belong.

[1] On the notes of the true Church, see Augustine, Contra Epist. fundamenti and Tertullian, De Praescript.

The third characteristic of the true Church is that she is catholic, or universal. Holy Scripture speaks of the Church under the image of a kingdom destined to spread itself throughout all parts of the world, and in which all men may find salvation, to attain the end for which they were created. In this regard we know that the Catholic Church is not restricted to one place, to one province, to one nation, but that she extends north, south, east, and west, over the whole wide world. She distinguishes not between nations of believers and unbelievers. We find Catholics in Protestant nations, in heathen and Mohammedan countries, among the savages of the remotest parts of Africa, Asia, and Oceanica, all united together by the bonds of the same faith and by participation in the same sacraments. Therefore the title Catholic belongs by right to our Church, because she is spread throughout all parts and embraces all periods. Our faith is the same as that of Abraham and the ancient patriarchs. They believed in the Redeemer that was to come, and we in the same Redeemer who has come. Christ is the corner-stone that joins together the faithful who were before Him with those who came after Him, the Old Testament with the New, the prophets with the apostles. What more striking proof of the catholicity of our Church could one ask?

The true Church must, finally, be apostolic; she must have been founded by the apostles, and must descend from the apostles and have their doctrine. Now all this is absolutely true of our Roman Catholic Church. The succession of her priests began with the apostles, and will continue so for all times. From our present Pope we can trace his predecessors in office to St. Peter, appointed by Jesus Christ Himself to be the head of His Church. And so can we trace the ordination and appointment of all Catholic bishops. The source of their authority is in each case a bishop ordained by one of the apostles, so that their office and authority were derived from the apostles.

Through this uninterrupted succession in the priesthood the doctrine of the Church has been preserved unchanged from the apostles down to us. It suffices to compare what is taught to-day with what was taught in the early Church, and we shall find that all articles of faith which we believe were also believed in the

time of the apostles. The doctrine given by Jesus Christ to the apostles, and by the apostles proclaimed to all nations, is still professed by all Catholics. This most evident proof suffices in order to demonstrate that our holy Church is manifestly the Church that Jesus Christ founded, because she has preserved all the marks of her origin. If members of the early Church were to rise from the dead in these days, they would immediately recognize in our holy Church the Church in which they lived and believed.

Behold, then, how the four marks, Oneness, Sanctity, Catholicity, and Apostolicity are found in our holy Church, and in her alone. The other so-called churches, standing in opposition to ours, cannot boast of the possession of these characteristics, and hence they are false religions.

There is still another sure mark by which we may recognize the true Church, that mark to which the divine Saviour referred when He foretold that His apostles would become objects of constant persecution on the part of the world. Which is the religious community, that Church against which all others seem to have sworn an irreconcilable hatred, which the world persecutes with its jibes and calumnies because she teaches the truth and condemns error and vice? Where is the Church that wears a crown of thorns, a diadem of suffering? It is our Catholic Church. The sword of persecution is continually drawn against the Church of Rome. She must continually struggle in the heat of strife. She is the true Church of Christ, and all other religious communities are false, because truth is only one, and there can be only one true Church.

All these things which we have considered are well calculated to make comprehensible to us the priceless privilege of belonging to the Catholic Church, a blessing which we can never sufficiently appreciate, a grace which has been imparted to us by the mercy of God without any merit whatever on our part. He who has the misfortune of being born and taught in a false religion may turn to the true one, and many have done so. Yet it is extremely difficult to overcome the prejudices of training and education. Hence let us be most grateful to God for the precious gift of faith, and let us make use of it in the way He desires. With-

out this the blessing will be not only useless, but will merit for us greater punishment. What would it avail us, indeed, to be children of a holy Church if we were to lead lives in contradiction to her teachings?

In order to be saved it is therefore not sufficient to be born in and to belong to the true Church. We must also profess her doctrines and arrange our manner of living according to her tenets. We must by the righteousness of our moral lives take part in the sanctity of the Church.

Along with the wheat in the fields grow the tares. But the mere fact of growing in a wheat field does not save the useless tares from destruction. This is the comparison which Jesus Christ employed to explain to us the necessity of having merits. Both good and bad members are now found in the field of the Church, but a separation will be made by Christ on the day of judgment. Great will then be the despair of bad Catholics to see themselves cast with the unbelievers and godless, condemned to the flames of hell, which will be all the more severe for them as they had been favored by God with admission to the true Church.

May this thought, dear brethren, dwell in your memory as a strong incentive to correspond faithfully with the graces received, and to live in His Church as God would have you, namely, as her loyal, obedient, and sanctified members. Amen.

The True Church of Christ

BY CARDINAL CORSI

In the world there are many sects, religions, and creeds, and the Jew, the Mohammedan, the Baptist, the Presbyterian, and the rest, each one claims his religion to be the true one. Each condemns as false the other creeds; the belief and religious practices of each are in opposition one to another. Yet truth can be but one, as God only is one; it is consequently impossible that all, or even two opposed creeds, can be true. There can be only one true religion, only one true Church of Christ.

How are we then to find the true Church in this bewildering throng of religious bodies? One thing is certain, and that is:

God could not leave us in ignorance in a matter of such great moment, a matter involving nothing less than our eternal welfare. The way that leads to salvation must be open to all; it must be one that each man may see and know. And so it is. The Lord has willed that His Church, like a city built upon the pinnacle of a mountain, should be visible and be manifest to the whole world, and He provided it with such evident marks that men of every condition are enabled to see it, and to distinguish it from false churches. The marks of the true Church are that she must be *one*, *holy*, *catholic*, and *apostolic*, and as these marks are alone found in the Roman Catholic Church, she alone is the true Church of Jesus Christ. Let me further explain this.

The true Church of Christ must be one; one in her faith, one in her communion, one in her constitution, one in her head. And this is the fact with our Church. She is one in faith. Although spread over the whole world, all her communities hold in every particular the same faith. Though her gospel is preached in many different languages, the truths proclaimed are the same. And so has it been ever since her foundation, and will ever be. Ask a Catholic in any part of the wide world, call from the grave a Catholic from any of the centuries that have passed since the founding of the Church, and this Catholic from the distant islands of the Pacific or from Iceland, this Catholic who lived before or after the Reformation, each will profess the same apostolic creed that you and I profess. The Roman Catholic Church is one in her belief, and while she has occasionally more clearly defined some particular dogma which was assailed by her enemies, she has never changed in the truths she has taught.

The Roman Catholic Church is one also in her communion and constitution. All her children are subject to the Supreme Head, partake of the same sacraments, join in the same sacrifice, the same prayers, the same divine worship. In order to preserve this supernatural community, Jesus Christ gave to the Church a constitution which makes her an active and perfectly governed body. In every diocese there is a bishop who has for his assistants the priests, and over all the bishops is placed the Pope, as the representative of Christ on earth. The laity are joined in communities under leadership of their pastors, the communi-

ties are joined into dioceses under their bishops, and all the dioceses together form the Church, under the leadership of the Pope.

The Pope is the representative of Jesus Christ, so that through the Pope the Church and all her faithful are directly linked with God. Thus there is one single flock, under one single shepherd (John x. 16). And this is the perfect unity of the Catholic Church.

How different from our holy Church is the situation in which the sects separated from our Church find themselves. I am not speaking here of infidels. Since they do not profess Jesus Christ, they cannot of course be one with Him. I speak of the sects that, though they call themselves Christians, are in opposition to our Church, and are commonly called Protestants. There is among them no unity because they do not hold the same belief. They cannot have unity in belief, for they acknowledge no supreme head, no supreme authority, no infallible teaching office. Each sect, in fact almost each individual Protestant, follows his own opinion and forms his belief according to his lights. Hence in each of the many sects there are almost as many opinions on matters of faith as there are individuals.

The true religion of Jesus Christ, furthermore, must be holy. Jesus Christ died, says St. Paul, in order to found a Church without spot and without wrinkle. Our Roman Catholic Church is holy in her invisible head, Jesus Christ, holy in her teaching and in her precepts, holy in her sacraments and religious exercises, holy in her commandments and in her aims, holy in her saints, and holy, finally, in her faithful and obedient children. Our Church, therefore, is holy, and she alone can be holy.

The sects separated from our Church cannot be holy; they have not Jesus Christ for their founder, nor have they the successors of the holy apostles for their heads. Their founders have been far from holy, and therefore could not endow them with holiness.

The true Church of Christ must also be catholic, which means universal. Truth is but one; it is the same at all times, in all places. That which is true here is true everywhere, and what is true to-day will be true to-morrow and for all time. The

Church, as the truth revealed to the world, must therefore be universal, existing at all times, since her foundation by Christ, and in all places, since she is the Church of God. Our Church teaches the truths which were revealed to our first parents, handed down by the patriarchs, defined by the law of Moses, proclaimed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, and spread abroad by the apostles and their successors throughout the world. These same truths will be proclaimed, unaltered, until the end of the world, because the Church will exist as long as the world, and her faith will be the true faith of the human race for all times. She is catholic, or univetsal, also as regards place. She invites every man, she enters the entire world and embraces all nations. Everywhere, and at all times, the same creed, the same holy sacrifice, are found within her fold.

Not so with the sects separated from our Church. They are not catholic, or universal. They are not universal in regard to place or to time. There was a time since the death of our Lord when they were not in existence, and in regard to place, many of them are the official religions of some particular State, and not much known beyond its borders.

Finally, the true Church of Christ must be apostolic. The divine Saviour confided the revealed truths to His apostles for the salvation of the world. To them he gave the commission to preach the same throughout the world. From the apostles, therefore, whom the Holy Spirit designates as the pillars and foundation of the Church (Apoc. xxi. 14), the true Church must descend. And this is the case with our Roman Catholic Church. She is apostolic, because the apostles commissioned by Christ established her and were her first shepherds. We can prove the succession of our bishops from the times of the apostles. We have in the Holy See of Rome the lawful successor of St. Peter. His doctrine is that received from the apostles. Hence the Roman Catholic Church is the apostolic Church, the Church of Jesus Christ, the only true Church.

That the Protestant sects cannot claim apostolic origin is evident. Yes, dear brethren, the true Church founded by the Redeemer of the world, propagated by His apostles, and confirmed by the blood of martyrs, is our Roman Catholic Church,

the only Church that is truly one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. In her alone has the Lord deposited the treasure of truth revealed to the world; deposited the treasures of grace which sanctifies souls, effects their salvation, and leads them to heaven. She is the Church which the Supreme Pastor, the Son of God, alone acknowledges as His, the Church in which the graces of the redemption merited by Christ are applied to mankind at all times without restriction. We must seek our salvation in her alone, for only in the field in which the treasure is buried (Matth. xiii. 44) can it be found; in another I seek in vain. He who preaches another gospel than that announced by the apostles, even if he were an angel from heaven, is anathema, says St. Paul, and to him who is an adherent of this other gospel, that ends in the flesh after beginning in the spirit, Christ will avail nothing; rather he will lose Christ (Gal. v. 2–4).

Let us therefore praise the Lord, and thank Him fervently for having preferred and elected us to be born in the bosom of His holy Church. Let us ever love this holy Church, this faithful Spouse of Jesus Christ; let us obey her voice; it is the voice of God. She will then lead us after the brief conflict of this earthly life to the eternal triumphs of heaven. Amen.

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FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

SUBJECT

GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

TEXT

If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you. . . . For the Father himself loveth you. — JOHN xvi. 23, 27.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. In the text of to-day's Gospel our Lord refers to God as His Father, because He is the natural Son of the Father. But God is also our Father, inasmuch as we are His adopted children through grace (see outline for Trinity Sunday, No. I). Hence in the Lord's Prayer we address God as "our Father who art in heaven."

I. God is called **Father.** 1. He is our Creator, who made us out of nothing to His own image and likeness. 2. God is our Ruler and Governor, who with paternal care watches over our lives and provides for our needs. 3. God has made us in the Sacrament of Baptism His own sons by adoption: "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)" (Rom. viii. 15).

II. God is called **our** Father. 1. This shows that God is not the Father of some particular individuals only, but of all men; and that consequently we are all brethren one of another and of Christ. 2. The word **our** teaches us that we should ask favors from God for our neighbor as well as ourselves. Hence St. Ambrose calls the Lord's Prayer the fraternal prayer.

III. God is called our Father **who is in heaven.** 1. God is everywhere present. 2. God is said to be especially in heaven, because there the greatness of His glory is manifested, and because the words "in heaven" are calculated to raise our minds

and hearts from earthly to spiritual things. 3. As the term **Father** is calculated to fill us with confidence, so the words **in heaven** are intended to inspire in us awe and reverence for God.

CONCLUSION. 1. We should always pray with filial confidence, knowing that God loves us as a Father. 2. We should love our neighbor and pray for him, because God is the Father of all. 3. We should pray with devotion and ask for heavenly things since our Father is in heaven, and is the source of every good.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part IV

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven

PREFATORY WORDS TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

As this form of Christian prayer, delivered by Jesus Christ, is of such importance as to have required the above prefatory words, which inspire those who approach God piously to approach Him also more confidently, it becomes the duty of the pastor to premise a distinct and perspicuous exposition of them. The pious Christian will thus have recourse to prayer with increased alacrity, knowing that in prayer he communes with God as with a father.[1] To consider the words alone which compose this preface, they are indeed very few in number; but looking to the matter, they are of the highest importance, and are replete with mysteries.

GOD, WHY CALLED "FATHER"

Father. The first word which by the command and institution of our Lord we utter in (the Greek and Latin forms of) this prayer is "Father." The Redeemer, it is true, might have com-

[1] The Lord's prayer is explained by the following: Tertullian, De Orat.; St. Cyprian, De Orat. Dominica; St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catech. 5. Mystag.; St. Chrysostom, Hom. de Orat. Dom.; St. Jerome, Theoph., Euthym. on Mark vi.; St. Ambrose, l. 4, de Sacrament, c. 4; St. Augustine, epist. 121 ad Probam.; de Sermone Domini in Monte, l. 2, cc. 5–9; hom. 42; De Bono Perseverantiae, cc. 2 seq.; Serm. 126, 135, 182 de Tempore; Cassian, Coll. 7, cc. 18–21; St. Thomas Aquinas, Opusc. de Orat. Dom.; Summa Theol., 2a, 2ae, q. 83, a. 9.

menced this prayer with a word more expressive of majesty, such as "Creator" or "Lord"; yet these He omitted, as they might be associated with ideas of terror, and chose rather an expression which inspires love and confidence. What name more tender than that of Father? — a name at once expressive of indulgence and love.[1]

FIRST PROOF OF THE PROPRIETY OF THE APPELLATION

The propriety of the word "Father," as applied to God, the faithful may be taught from the works of Creation, Government, and Redemption. God created man to His own image and likeness, an image and likeness which He impressed not on other creatures; and on account of this peculiar privilege with which He adorned man, He is appropriately designated in Scripture the Father of all men, the Father not alone of the faithful but of all mankind.

SECOND PROOF

His government of mankind supplies another argument for the propriety of the appellation. By the exercise of a special superintending providential care over us and our interests, He manifests the love of a Father towards us. But to comprehend more clearly the force of this argument, which is drawn from His paternal care over us, it may be necessary to say a few words on the guardianship of those celestial spirits whom He has appointed to watch over and protect us.

GUARDIAN ANGELS, THEIR MINISTRY

Angels are commissioned by Divine Providence to guard the human race and be present with every man to protect him from injury. As parents, when their children have occasion to travel a dangerous way, infested by robbers, appoint persons to guard and assist them in case of attack, so has our Heavenly Father placed angels over each of us, in our journey towards our heavenly country, that guarded by their vigilant care and assistance we may escape the ambushes and repel the fierce attacks of our enemies, proceed directly on our journey, secured by this

[1] See St. Leo, serm. 6, de nat. Dom.; St. Thom. 1, p. quaest. 33, art. 1.

guiding protection against the devious paths into which our treacherous enemy would mislead us, and pursue steadily the path that leads to heaven.

The important advantages which flow to the human race from this special superintending Providence, the functions and the administration of which are intrusted to angels, who hold a middle place between man and the Divinity, appear from numerous examples recorded in Scripture. These passages prove that angels, as the ministers of the divine goodness, have frequently wrought wonderful things in the sight of men, and they give us to understand that innumerable other important services are rendered to us by the invisible ministry of angels, the guardians of our safety and salvation.

The angel Raphael, who was appointed by God the companion and guide of Tobias,[1] conducted him and brought him back safe again.[2] He helped to save him from being devoured by a large fish, and pointed out to him the singular virtue of its gall and heart;[3] he expelled the evil demon, and by fettering and binding up his power prevented him from injuring Tobias; he taught the young man the true and legitimate rights of marriage, and restored to the elder Tobias the use of his sight.[4]

The angel who delivered the prince of the Apostles also affords abundant matter of instruction on the admirable advantages which flow from the care and guardianship of angels. To this event, therefore, the pastor will also call the attention of the faithful. He will point to the angel illuminating the darkness of the prison, awakening Peter by touching his side, loosing his chains, bursting his bonds, admonishing him to rise, to take up his sandals and other apparel, and to follow him.[5] The pastor will also direct their attention to the same angel restoring Peter to liberty, conducting him out of prison through the midst of the guards, throwing open the door of his prison, and ultimately placing him in safety without its precincts. The sacred Scriptures, as we have already observed, abound in examples which give us an idea of the magnitude of the benefits conferred on us by the ministry of angels, whose tutelary protection is not con-

[1] Tob. v. 6. [2] Tob. xii. 3. [3] Tob. vi. 5.
[4] Tob. xii. 3. [5] Acts xii. 7.

fined to particular occasions or persons, but extends to each individual of the human race, from the hour of his birth. In the exposition of this point of doctrine the diligence of the pastor will be rewarded with one important advantage: the minds of the faithful will be interested, and excited to acknowledge and revere the paternal care and providence of God.[1]

UTILITY OF THIS EXPOSITION; IT SHOWS THE GOODNESS OF GOD

The pastor will here exalt and proclaim the riches of the goodness of God to man. Ever since the transgression of our first parents, who entailed upon us the evil consequences of sin, we have never ceased to offend Him by innumerable crimes and enormities, even to the present hour, yet God retains His love for us, and still continues His special care over us. To imagine that He is unmindful of His creatures were insanity, and nothing less than to hurl against the Deity the most blasphemous insult. God was angry with the people of Israel because they supposed themselves deserted by His care: tempting the Lord, they said, "Is the Lord amongst us or not?"[2] And again, "The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth."[3] The faithful are therefore to be deterred by these passages from the impiety of imagining that God can at any time be forgetful of man. The Israelites, as we read in Isaias, make the complaint against God; and its unreasonableness God exposes by a similitude which breathes nought but kindness: "Sion said: the Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me"; to which God answers, "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in my hands."[4]

Indisputably as these passages establish this truth, yet to bring home to the minds of the faithful an absolute conviction that at no time does God forget man, or withdraw from him the offices of paternal love, the pastor will add to the evidence of this truth by introducing the example of our first parents, by

[1] Concerning the creation and dignity of the angels see Part I under the first Article of the Creed.

[2] Exod. xvii. 7. [3] Ezek. viii. 12. [4] Isa. xlix. 14–16.

which it is so strikingly illustrated. When you hear them sharply reproved for having violated the command of God; when you hear their condemnation pronounced in this awful sentence, "Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth";[1] when you see them driven out of Paradise; when, to extinguish all hope of return, you read that a fiery cherub was stationed at the entrance, brandishing "a flaming sword, turning every way";[2] when you know that to avenge the injury done Him, God consigned them to every affliction of mind and body; when you see and know all this, would you not be led to pronounce that man was lost irrecoverably? that he was not only deprived of all assistance from God, but also abandoned to every species of misery? But although the storm of the divine wrath burst over his guilty head, yet the love of God shot a gleam of consolation across the darkness that enveloped him. The Sacred Scriptures inform us that "the Lord God made for Adam and his wife, garments of skins, and clothed them,"[3] a convincing proof that at no time does God abandon His creature man.

That no injuries offered to God by man can exhaust the divine love is a truth contained in these words of David: "Will he [God] in his anger shut up his mercies?"[4] And Habacuc, addressing himself to God, distinctly says, "When thou art angry, thou wilt remember mercy."[5] "Who is a God like to thee," says Micheas, "who takest away iniquity, and passest by the sin of the remnant of thy inheritance? he will send his fury in no more, because he delighteth in mercy."[6] When, therefore, we imagine that God has abandoned us, that we are deprived of His protection, then in an especial manner does He, of his infinite goodness, seek after and protect us; for in His anger He stays the sword of His justice, and ceases not to pour out the inexhaustible treasures of His mercy.

[1] Gen. iii. 17, 18. [2] Gen. iii. 23, 24. [3] Gen. iii. 21.
[4] Ps. lxxvi. 10. [5] Hab. iii. 2. [6] Mich. vii. 18.

THIRD PROOF

The creation and government of the world, therefore, display in an admirable manner the singular love and protecting care of God; but among these the great work of redemption stands out so prominently that this God of boundless beneficence, our Father, has by this third benefit crowned and shed a lustre on the other invaluable blessings bestowed on us by His bounty. The pastor, therefore, will announce to his spiritual children, and will sound continually in their ears, this overwhelming manifestation of the love of God towards us, in order that they may know that by redemption they are become, in an admirable manner, the children of God. "He gave them power," says St. John, "to be made the sons of God," who are born of God.[1] Therefore it is that baptism, which we receive as the first pledge and memorial of redemption, is called "the sacrament of regeneration"; for thereby we are born children of God. "That which is born of the Spirit," says our Lord, "is spirit." We must be born again;[2] and the Apostle Peter says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible," by the word of the living God.[3] By virtue of our redemption we have received the Holy Spirit, and are dignified with the grace of God, by which we are adopted sons of God. "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear," says St. Paul, "but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba, (Father.)"[4] Of this adoption, the force and efficacy are explained by St. John in these words: "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God."[5]

RECIPROCAL AFFECTION DUE TO GOD

These truths explained, the pastor will remind the faithful of the reciprocal affection which they owe to God, our most loving Father; because by this means they will comprehend what love and piety, what obedience and veneration, they should render to their Creator, Governor, and Redeemer, and with what hope and confidence they should invoke his name.

[1] John i. 12, 13. [2] John iii. 6, 7. [3] 1 Pet. i. 23.
[4] Rom. viii. 15. [5] 1 John iii. 1.

GOD LOVES WHILE HE CHASTISES

But to instruct the ignorance and correct the perversity of such as may imagine that prosperity is the only proof of the love of God, and that adversity, with which he may please to visit us, indicates his hostility and the utter alienation of his love, the pastor will show that when the hand of the Lord touches us,[1] it is not with hostile purpose, but to heal by striking. If he chastises the sinner, it is to reclaim him by salutary severity, and to rescue him from everlasting perdition by the infliction of present punishment. He visits our iniquities with a rod, and our sins with stripes; but his mercy he taketh not away from us.[2] The faithful, therefore, are to be admonished to recognize in such chastisements a proof of his paternal love, to keep in their memory and on their lips these words of the patient Job: "He woundeth, and cureth: he striketh, and his hands shall heal";[3] and to adopt these sentiments, and repeat these words of the prophet Jeremiah, spoken in the name of the people of Israel: "Thou hast chastised me, and I was instructed, as a young bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Convert me, and I shall be converted, for thou art the Lord my God."[4] Let them also keep before their eyes the example of Tobias, who, when he felt the hand of God upon him, visiting him with blindness, exclaimed, "I bless thee, O Lord God of Israel, because thou hast chastised me."[5]

WE ARE NOT TO MURMUR AGAINST HIS WILL

Here the faithful should guard with the utmost caution against the error of believing that any afflictions or calamities befall them without the knowledge of God. He Himself assures us that a hair of our head shall not perish;[6] they should rather be cheered by these words, which we read in the Apocalypse: "Such as love, I rebuke and chastise";[7] and all their apprehensions should be calmed by these words of exhortation addressed by St. Paul to the Hebrews: "My son, neglect not the discipline of the Lord; neither be thou wearied whilst thou art

[1] Job xix. 21. [2] Ps. lxxxviii. 34. [3] Job v. 18.
[4] Jer. xxxi. 18. [5] Tob. xi. 17. [6] Luke xxi. 18.
[7] Apoc. iii. 19.

rebuked by him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth; and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."[1]

WE ARE ALL BRETHREN OF CHRIST

Our. When, under the name of Father, we all invoke God, calling him emphatically "our Father," we are taught that as a necessary consequence of the gift and right of divine adoption we are brethren, and should love one another as brethren: "All you are brethren," says the Redeemer, "for one is your father, who is in heaven";[2] and hence, in their Epistles the Apostles call all the faithful brethren.

Another necessary consequence is, that by the same divine adoption not only are all the faithful united in one common brotherhood, but also called, and really are, brethren of the only begotten Son of God, who assumed our nature. Hence the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the Son of God, says, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name to my brethren."[3] This David had so many centuries before prophesied of the Redeemer; and our Lord Himself says to the woman mentioned in the Gospel, "Go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, there they shall see me."[4] This He said after His resurrection, when He had put on immortality, lest it should be supposed that this fraternal relation was dissolved by His resurrection, and ascension into heaven. So far is the resurrection of Christ from dissolving this bond of union and love that, from the very throne on which He will sit on the last day, resplendent with majesty and glory to judge a congregated world, even the least of the faithful shall be called by the name of brethren.[5]

But how, possibly, can we be other than brethren of Christ, called as we are, co-heirs with him? He is the first begotten, appointed heir of all;[6] but we, begotten in the next place, are co-heirs with Him, according to the measure of heavenly gifts, and according to the degree of love with which we prove ourselves servants and co-operators of the Holy Ghost. By the

[1] Heb. xii. 5. [2] Matt. xxiii. 8, 9. [3] Heb. ii. 11, 12; Ps. xxi. 23.
[4] Matt. xxviii. 10. [5] Matt. xxv. 40. [6] Rom. viii. 17; Heb. i. 2.

inspiration of the Holy Ghost we are animated to virtue, and to meritorious actions; supported by His grace, we are inflamed to engage with fortitude in the combat for salvation, the successful termination of which, and of our earthly career, will be rewarded by our Heavenly Father with that imperishable crown of justice which is reserved for all who shall have run the same course; "for God," says the Apostle, "is not unjust, that he should forget" our work and our love.[1]

THE WORD "OUR" TO BE UTTERED WITH HEARTFELT PIETY

But with what sentiments of heartfelt piety we should utter the word "our," these words of St. Chrysostom declare: "God," says he, "willingly hears the prayer of a Christian, not only when offered for himself, but for another. Necessity obliges us to pray for ourselves; charity exhorts us to pray for others. The prayer of fraternal charity," he adds, "is more acceptable to God than that of necessity."[2]

OUR DEMEANOR TOWARDS OTHERS SHOULD BESPEAK FRATERNAL REGARD: OUR COMMON BROTHERHOOD

On the subject of prayer, a subject so important, so salutary, it becomes the duty of the pastor to admonish and exhort all his hearers, of every age, sex, and rank, to be mindful of this common brotherhood, and instead of arrogating to themselves an insolent superiority over others, to exhibit in their conduct the bearing and the tone of fraternal regard. True, there are many gradations of office in the Church of God, yet that diversity of rank is far from severing the bond of this fraternal relationship; in the same manner as variety of use and diversity of office do not cause this or that member of the same body to forfeit the name or functions of a member. The monarch, seated on his throne and bearing the sceptre of royal authority as one of the faithful, is the brother of all who are within the communion of the Christian faith. There is not one God the Creator of the rich, another of the poor; one of kings, another of subjects; but there is one God who is common Lord and Father of all. Considering their spiritual origin, we see that the nobility of all

[1] Heb. vi. 10.

[2] Chrys. hom. 14, operis imperfecti in Matt.

is the same. For we are all born of the same spirit, through the same sacrament of faith, children of God, and co-heirs to the same immortal inheritance. The wealthy and the great have not one Christ for their God, the poor and the lowly another; they are not initiated by different sacraments; they do not expect a different inheritance. No, we are all brethren; in the language of the Apostle, "We are members of his [Christ's] body, of his flesh, and of his bones."[1] "You are all the children of God by faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus."[2]

THIS DOCTRINE TO BE FORCIBLY INCULCATED BY THE PASTOR

This is a subject which the pastor should handle with all possible care. On its consideration he cannot expend too much knowledge and ability, because it is not less calculated to fortify and sustain the indigent and the lowly than to restrain and repress the arrogance of the rich and the pride of the powerful. It was to remedy this evil that the Apostle so forcibly pressed on the attention of the faithful this principle of fraternal charity.

IN WHAT SPIRIT WE SHOULD UTTER THE WORDS "OUR FATHER"

When, therefore, O Christian, you are about to address this prayer to God, remember that you, as a son, approach God your Father; and when you begin the prayer and utter the words "our Father," reflect for a moment how exalted is the dignity to which the infinite love of God has raised you. He commands you to approach Him, not with the reluctance and timidity of a servant approaching his Lord, but with the eagerness and the security of a child flying to the bosom of his father. Consider also with what recollection and attention, with what care and devotion, you should approach Him in prayer. You must approach Him as becomes a child of God. Your prayers and actions must be such as not to be unworthy of that divine origin with which it has pleased your most gracious God to ennoble you, — a duty to which the Apostle exhorts when he says, "Be

[1] Eph. v. 30. [2] Gal. iii. 26, 27, 28.

ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children";[1] that of us may be truly said, what the Apostle wrote to the Thessalonians, "All you are the children of light, and the children of the day."[2]

IN WHAT SENSE GOD IS EVERYWHERE

Who art in Heaven. All who have a correct idea of the Divinity agree that God is everywhere present. This, however, is not to be understood as if he consisted of parts, filling and governing one place with one part, another place with another; for God is a spirit, and is therefore indivisible. Who would presume to circumscribe within the limits of any place, or confine to any particular spot, Him who says of Himself, "Do not I fill heaven and earth"?[3] Yes, by His power and virtue He fills heaven and earth, and all things contained therein. He is present with all things, creating them, or preserving them when already created; while He Himself is confined to no place, is circumscribed by no limits, is defined by nothing to prevent His being present everywhere by His immensity and omnipotence. "If," says the Psalmist, "I ascend into heaven, thou art there."[4]

WHY SAID TO BE SPECIALLY IN HEAVEN

God, although present in all places and in all things, and, as we have already observed, circumscribed by no limits, is, however, frequently said in Scripture to have His dwelling in the heavens, because the heavens which we see are the noblest part of the visible world, undecaying in splendor, excelling all other objects in power, magnitude, and beauty, and moving with uniform and harmonious revolution. To elevate the soul of man to the contemplation of His infinite power and majesty, which shine forth with such splendor in the expanse of heaven, God therefore declares that His dwelling is in the heavens. He also frequently declares that there is no part of creation that is not filled by His divinity and power, which are everywhere present. In the consideration of this subject the faithful will, however, propose to themselves not only the image of the universal Father of mankind, but also that of God reigning in heaven, in order

[1] Eph. v. 1. [2] 1 Thess. v. 5. [3] Jer. xxiii. 24.
[4] Ps. cxxxviii. 8; Aug., lib. 1, Conf. c. 3; St. Thomas, 1, p. q. 8, art. 2.

that when approaching Him in prayer they may recollect that heart and soul are to be raised to heaven. The transcendent nature and divine majesty of our Father who is in heaven should inspire us with as much Christian humility and piety as the name of father should fill us with love and confidence.

These words also inform us what are to be the objects of our prayers. All our supplications offered for the useful and necessary things of this life, unless united to the bliss of heaven and referred to that end, are to no purpose, and are unworthy of a Christian. Of this manner of praying the pastor, therefore, will admonish his pious hearers, and will strengthen the admonition with the authority of the Apostle: "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God: mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth."[1]

Sermons

Our Father Who Art in Heaven

BY THE REV. L. RULAND, D.D.

Happy and highly favored were those privileged persons who saw our Lord in His human form and heard the words of everlasting life from His lips. Many centuries have elapsed since He walked on earth, but God's Word is always with us, and in spirit at least we can still transport ourselves to that glorious time, and, children of the twentieth century as we are, we can now listen to the same saving doctrine. I have no new message to give you; I only wish to call to your minds words familiar to you all; words that each of you learned at his mother's knee, —the words of the Our Father.

Picture to yourselves the mountain of the Beatitudes, where our Saviour preached His great Sermon on the Mount. The scenery all around is very beautiful, and well adapted to raise men's hearts and dispose them to receive the words of eternal life. The mountain has two peaks, separated by a stretch of meadowland; it stands at a little distance from the Lake of Genesareth, and from its summit is seen a wide expanse of fertile country,

[1] Col. iii. 1, 2.

with the snowclad peaks of Hermon and Lebanon in the background. It was amid these fair surroundings that our Divine Lord said to the listening multitude: "Thus . . . shall you pray: Our Father who art in heaven." He taught them the prayer that for two thousand years has been uttered by millions of human beings. Like everything truly great, this prayer is very plain and simple, but profound depths of Divine wisdom underlie these simple words,—wisdom such as our human intelligence cannot fathom, even though a lifetime were devoted to the task.

Let us make an attempt to penetrate a little way below the surface, and to gather up at least a few golden grains of Divine instruction and consolation adapted to the age in which we live,—an age rich in outward splendor and poor in real inward worth, and consequently greatly in need of help. To-day I can deal only with the opening words: *Our Father who art in heaven.*

If I were asked to mention the chief characteristic of our public and religious life, I should say that it is the disappearance of all outward manifestation of religion from the daily thoughts and actions of men. Have you ever looked at any ancient documents? Any of you who are familiar with such things will bear out my assertion that even when they refer to purely secular matters they begin with the name of God, and the feasts of the Church were the centre points of public life. For instance, a contract is signed on the Monday after *Judica;* interest is payable on St. George's day; a man signs his will on the Wednesday after *Misericordia Domini,* and servants are engaged on Candlemas Day. We prosaic people substitute a number, the day of the month, for all these things. This is perhaps an unimportant trifle, but nevertheless it marks the trend of thought. We refrain more and more from any allusion to God in our daily business; many people make no profession at all of religion, and many others, who still claim to be Christians, look upon religion more or less as they do upon their best clothes, which are put on now and then for an hour or two. Religion, as affecting and influencing the whole of human existence, religion as the keynote of life, threatens to become very rare nowadays. Men are rather too proud of their knowledge. Nature no longer confronts them as something unknown and mysterious, for scien-

tific research has revealed to them treasures hidden from their forefathers, and the result has been that they are dazzled, and have grown too short-sighted to see anything except what is close to them, and they employ their learning in building up a reputation for themselves, instead of humbly laboring at the temple of eternal Wisdom.

Natural science has recently made many discoveries, and because we now know the laws governing a small department of nature, some people imagine that the solution of all problems has been found out. Consequently those engaged in scientific research have in many cases ceased to think of God. There can be no greater mistake than this, for such pride robs us of what we have, giving nothing in return; it inflicts, but does not heal, wounds; it is destructive, not constructive.

Not long ago I read an anecdote that supplies us with an excellent illustration of what I mean. A child was asked which was more important, the sun or the moon, and in his ignorance he replied the moon, for it shines by night, whereas the sun shines by day, when it is light in any case. Equally erroneous is the opinion of those who fancy that their paltry scraps of knowledge can take the place of the grand conception of God, the idea of the eternal Wisdom. An honest and serious scientist soon reaches the limit of human knowledge, and as soon as we make a step forward the darkness closes in upon us, and we realize only too well the justice of a complaint uttered by a real scientist: "*Ignoramus et ignorabimus*, we do not and we shall not know." I will not enumerate all the various interpretations that have been suggested for the mystery of the universe, the theories regarding matter, blind necessity, and so on. They teach us one thing only, and that is the truth. It is not enough for us to have the light of the moon, that illumines the darkness of life beautifully indeed, but insufficiently; we need the sunlight, and cannot dispense with our faith in God, and therefore we owe a debt of gratitude to our Lord Jesus Christ for having removed our doubts and taught us to say: "Our Father who art in heaven." He was preceded by many philosophers who discussed with profound learning the problems of the universe and of human existence. Christ, however, has nothing in common

with them; He did not teach as the sages of this world taught; He propounded no elaborate systems and made no complicated deductions, but He stated the truth in all its simple grandeur and with the authority of a personality before whom His enemies trembled, confessing that He spoke as one possessing power. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ gave us the solution of all the problems regarding human existence when He proclaimed that the unseen and eternal God, our Father who is in heaven, was the Creator of all things. We cannot see Him as He is, in all His glory. A man who tries to gaze at the sun must soon avert his eyes from its dazzling splendor, although he may contemplate its beauty reflected in a dewdrop and see how each ray of light is broken up into seven exquisite colors. In the same way we cannot contemplate God face to face, but wherever we look we see a reflection of His Divine power and wisdom. Our mortal eyes are incapable of beholding Him in His infinite simplicity and greatness, but in all that is true, good, and beautiful we can discover His action, revealed in manifold tints. These tints are visible everywhere throughout the universe, and above all in the human soul. We have the faculty of self-examination and can criticize our own thoughts and feelings. There is nothing in this world greater or more wonderful than the soul of man, which is not confined to the place where he lives, nor to the body, for it can rise above all limitations of time and space. The mind of man is ever active, seeking incessantly for truth. Where the acquisition of knowledge and truth is at stake, we do not hesitate to sacrifice our comfort and rest and to brave the perils of the sea and the desert. This eager quest of knowledge indicates the possibility of acquiring it, for we cannot believe that all mankind has erred, when in search of truth it has invariably throughout the ages lighted upon the conception of God. We must assume that our own souls reflect one great, eternal Spirit, whose abode is in heaven, and who with the arms of His omnipotence embraces all that exists — a Spirit that we need not regard with fear and alarm, but whom our Divine Saviour bids us address as "Our Father who art in heaven."

I remarked at the beginning of my sermon that there is at the present day a tendency to eliminate all reference to God from

public life. I have shown the truth of this statement with regard to the intellectual life of the day, but it is equally applicable to men's moral life. They refuse to allow any thought of God to influence their daily existence, nor do they recognize Him as the supreme Legislator and Judge of their actions. It is sometimes startling to see to what lengths people go in this respect. They look upon conscientious scruples and Christian duties as quite obsolete. They are reckless in the pursuit of their own advantage, reckless too in seizing every opportunity of promoting their temporal prosperity. They wish to get on, no matter by what means. Their low standard of morality is to some extent concealed by their success and regard for outward respectability; but from time to time we have occasion to observe the downfall of undertakings and of persons whose honesty it would have seemed impossible to doubt, and those who yesterday enjoyed titles and honors, to-day are branded as criminals, or die by their own hand. When this happens, we see for a moment the abyss on the brink of which we are standing. Let us beware of self-deception on this point — no morality can be based upon the abstract rules of social obligations, nor upon those of human ideals. As soon as men lose sight of the fact that God, our heavenly Father, has laid down laws regulating human action, they become a law to themselves; there is no longer any definite standard of right and wrong, but everything is merely a matter of opinion, and the passions and cravings of the individual will never be restrained by a moral code of human origin.

The sole foundation for morality is God, to whom we appeal as Our Father in heaven. Whenever men forsake and forget Him, loyalty and faith perish. The fact that at the present day the antagonism of the various classes, due to their conflicting interests, has not yet caused irremediable harm, must be ascribed to the Christian foundation of our civilization, which still exercises a beneficial influence even on those who deny it. Alas for us and for our earthly prosperity if ever Christianity so far loses its hold upon the masses as to cease to affect the majority of the population! We read in books of natural history of the lion's generosity, but I fancy none of us, if unarmed, would care

to encounter a lion in the desert and to rely upon his generosity. Those who desire to maintain the standard of morality without basing it upon religion, urge us to do right for its own sake; but we cannot trust them. There is but one solution to the moral problem, and our Saviour has given it to us in the Our Father. Since God in heaven is our Father, we are all His children, and therefore brethren. In this way faith in our heavenly Father is the foundation of human society and mutual charity, and from this faith proceeds the hope of our inheritance in heaven. Thus for nearly two thousand years Christian faith, hope, and charity have influenced the minds of men. Sometimes people of all ranks have been imbued with the glorious idea that God is the Father of all, and consequently all men are brothers; at other times they have lost sight of this thought, although it has always reappeared as the one sure foundation of human society. It is our duty to strive that mankind may attain their highest aim, and that these glorious truths should always obtain recognition in public life.

There is one mistake against which I wish to warn you: Do not complain too much of the evil spirit of the age. What we mean by the spirit of the age is the opinion of the majority, or perhaps of the noisiest of our contemporaries. If this spirit displeases us, we should remember that we are to some extent answerable for it, since each of us has a voice which he can use as he chooses. If we see that we are not in the majority, it behooves us to proclaim all the more emphatically our faith in our heavenly Father. In the Bible those who believe in God are called a priestly people. This priestly office held by mankind in general is the service of God by means of charity towards Him and our fellow men. Blessed will be the day when public acknowledgment is once more made of our Father in heaven. We must do our best to hasten its approach, and to make known by our actions the universal fatherhood of God, and the fact that all men, being His children, are brothers. Can this be accomplished while the world is so far from perfect? We shall fare like the traveller walking towards the rising sun — he sees it on the horizon, and fancies that he has but a mile to go in order to grasp it. He hurries along the luminous path,

but the sun is always far away and rises high over his head. Thus is it with our ideals; but nevertheless it is worth while to attempt their realization, for some day it will be attained. Our great consolation is that our life on earth is not the only life — it is but a time of probation. When we say the words *Our Father*, we give utterance to our hope of a heavenly inheritance after our earthly conflict is over. But the sufferings and struggles of this world are intended to purify our souls, so that we may grow in grace and become true children of God, worthy of the imperishable inheritance prepared for us by our Father who is in heaven. Amen.

Confidence in Our Heavenly Father

BY THE REV. S. ANSELM PARKER, O.S.B., M.A.

I. The infant learns to lisp a name full of reality. In every true Christian household a father combines with the strength of manhood a tender care for his child. He wins the child's confidence. And from human personality thus unconsciously understood a child first learns that God is a Person, a Father, who is worthy of trust and love. The child learns in his first prayer to address God thus: "Our Father who art in heaven." And as we grow, we more consciously inquire, Who is God? In the days before the Incarnation it was difficult to realize God's character. It would seem that but few chosen souls came to look upon Him as Father. Fully to reveal God to mankind was one of the objects of the Incarnation. By the coming of Jesus Christ the Old Law attitude of fear and state of bondage passed away. "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear," St. Paul reminded his converts, "but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)" (Rom. viii. 15). And again he writes in another of his letters (Eph. iii. 11, 12), "In Christ Jesus our Lord . . . we have boldness and access with confidence" to God through our faith in Him. The great grace given by the Incarnation was that easy way of approach to God, that outspoken freedom of speech, that feeling of confidence which marks the love and familiarity of children in sharp contrast with servile fear. He came to lay open the

heavens to man; He came to bring the heavens to earth. Jesus Christ, true and real God, dwelt in the midst of His people, gathering round Himself not only the pure of heart and the repentant sinner, but all who would accept His invitation: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are heavily burdened." All shall be His children. All may approach Him with confidence. And Jesus Christ, God the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, was true and real man as well; and showing Himself as the First Born, the Elder Brother, He gave us the example of reverence, love, and confidence towards the Father. Indeed all His words, from those first recorded words, "Did you not know, that I must be about my Father's business?" to the last words on the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," show forth the perfect attitude towards the Father which must be ours. He came to reveal God; to restore intimate relations between man and God. It was precisely sin and its consequent blindness of mind and heart that brought into the world estrangement between man and God, and with it fear. God does not change: He is ever a loving Father. But man had become sinful and ignorant and fearful. At the opening of the Bible in the Book of Genesis (iii. 10) we read how Adam sinned and when God called him at length he answered, "I was afraid, and I hid myself." The Incarnation brought true knowledge and redemption from sin for those who would take it. It changed the heart and mind of man, so that at length we read the words that significantly form the last words of the Bible — the last cry of the Church and every redeemed soul is the yearning desire to be with God, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Apoc. xxi. 20).

II. 1. The words of to-day's Gospel are part of the Revelation that has made this change within us. They help us to know our Heavenly Father. They are an expansion of a clause in that prayer which Jesus Himself taught us at the request of His disciples, "Our Father who art in heaven." "If you ask the Father anything in my name," He says, "He will give it you." The same lesson Our Lord had previously enjoined in the Sermon on the Mount. Be not solicitous, He said, over the material things of life. You know the Father's care for the birds of the air, for the lilies of the field: how much more is His care for you, O ye of

little faith. "Your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things." And again elsewhere He would argue with us: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: better are you than many sparrows" (Matt. x. 29). And once again He says: "What man is there among you, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? . . . If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more will your Father who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?" (Matt. vii. 9, 11). If a child may have confidence in an earthly father, then surely may we in our Heavenly Father! Ask, ask with confidence, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

In such strong and convincing ways, in figures that all can understand, does our Lord strive to bring home to each of us the care of the Heavenly Father for each of us, a solicitude so tender, so universal, so minute! And that knowledge is a powerful motive for confidence. Indeed what folly of men to mistrust Him! And in man's mistrust what a disappointment to One who loves!

2. Full and striking is the revelation contained in these few words; and underlying a multitude of our Lord's teachings is the same grand motive. No doubt the chief lesson of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican in the temple is that of humble prayer; that of the friend who asks for loaves at midnight is one of the rewards of perseverance; that of the woman who rejoices to have found the lost coin is one of the value God sets on a soul lost and found again. But what do we not see beyond the primary lesson? That God is so good that He bends down to listen to the repentant sinner; that He wishes us to offer Him the holy violence of persevering prayer; that He rejoices on the finding of the lost. Thus on each occasion we are taught more about the character of the good God, and drawn to have greater confidence in Him.

Next, we may turn from His sayings that directly reveal the Father and study any of the Gospel incidents. We remember that He Himself, being Divine, is in the whole of His life and

conduct towards us the Revelation of God. In these we find still more abundant incentives to confidence. We have a wealth of examples. For instance, recall that occasion on which a sudden tempest on the lake threatened to destroy the disciples, while Jesus Himself was asleep — and apparently unheeding. The disciples were filled with terror and the strength of their hearts failed them in the midst of the real danger. They awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us, we perish." And Jesus stilled the violence of the storm with His word of command — such is His power. And because His interest and carefulness never flag His rebuke was well deserved: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" For they had lost their confidence in Him.

Each detail of His life we may study from this one point of view; and each will bring out in fuller light His true character. We combine them all. We recognize His own portrait in the Good Samaritan, in the father of the Prodigal Son, and He quite expressly points to Himself as the Good Shepherd. We have One whom we know we can trust.

3. Because God is a true Father, good, wise, all-powerful, loving, ever attentive, what need for fear? He is at hand. And as we find Him to have been to the disciples with whom He lived on earth, so do we find Him in the lives of all the saints. When St. Paul came to Corinth he was overwhelmed with discouragement at the magnitude of the task before him and the opposition against him. But at night he had a vision. The Lord stood before him and said, "Fear not; I am with thee." Then all was changed.

4. Though no doubt without visions, without miraculous interventions, still is He ever present in the lives of each. If we search through our own past experience we cannot doubt it. The Church keeps ever before us this great truth when we are tossed about on a sea of anxiety, or shrinking at the voice of the thunder of fear, or chilled by the sun-obscuring clouds of mental darkness. There is a depth of meaning in her oft-repeated *Dominus vobiscum*. There should be the same real blessing as the Christian bids his friends *Adieu*, committing them to the Heavenly Father's care, wishing them God-speed. For in His hands all will be well.

III. The truth which will steel us against diffidence and discouragement is this: God values us because He is our Father and we are His most dear children. We are indeed precious to Him. And why? Not because of our possessions and worldly position. Not because of our abilities and accomplishments — even these are gifts but lent to us. Not because of the worthiness of our actions. But because we ourselves — each one, whether rich or poor, whether learned or ignorant, whether sinful or deserving — each one equally has a native, inherent worth, a very great intrinsic value. Consider, my brethren. Each one is made "unto God's own image and likeness"; He loves us because we are His own — the glorious work of His hands, a marvellous spiritual creation. Again, each one of us is "bought with a great price"; He loves us because we have cost Him so much, even the price of His Precious Blood. Once again, each one from the cradle to the grave is the object of His tender devotedness, so constantly is He averting dangers, so repeatedly raising us up, so often bestowing His graces, so richly adorning us, as much as each will allow Him, with virtues, even to making us Temples of the Holy Spirit; He loves us because He has already devoted Himself so generously to us. And yet once more, each one of us, immortal in our nature, is destined to happiness with Him in our eternal home. He loves us with an earnestness or, to speak human words, with an anxiety of love, for we may yet lose the way unless He loves us still.

These four considerations prove to us — and convince our reason — that we are most precious in His regard; these considerations lay open before us the real deep motives for our confidence. No wonder, then, our Lord should say: Consider God's providence for the birds of the air; are not you of much more value than they? No wonder He should urge us to reflect on the glory with which God clothes the lilies of the field, and then ask us: How much more you, O ye of little faith? Let us obey the word of St. Peter who spoke from intimate knowledge, and cast all our care upon Him, for He careth for us (1 Pet. v. 7). Then ours will be the reward of the Psalmist: "I have been young, and now am old; and I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread" (Ps. xxxvi. 25). Be not solicitous, says our

Lord. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.

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FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

SUBJECT

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

TEXT

And the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God. — MARK xvi. 19.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. During forty days after His Resurrection our Lord appeared many times and in diverse places and circumstances to His disciples and others. He walked and talked with them, He permitted them to see and put their hands into His wounds, and He ate with them; thus proving by the most incontestable arguments that He was really risen from the dead, and was again living in His own body. It was also during those forty days that our Saviour gave His Apostles final instructions concerning His Church.

I. **"He ascended into heaven."** 1. Give brief history of the Ascension as detailed in to-day's Gospel and Epistle. 2. Christ ascended into heaven as man; as God He was always there. 3. Christ ascended into heaven by His own power.

II. He **"sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."** 1. These words express the glory which Christ as man enjoys above all others in heaven. This glory the Saviour

merited by His earthly poverty, sufferings, and death (Philip. ii. 9). 2. Christ is now constituted King over all the world: "of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 33; Eph. i. 22; Heb. ii. 8).

III. Reasons of our Lord's Ascension. 1. Heaven was the suitable place for His glorified body. 2. In heaven He prepares for us a place (John xiv. 2); He is our advocate with the Father (Heb. ix. 24), and thence He sent the Holy Ghost to His Church (John xvi. 7). 3. Christ's Ascension is for us the cause and model of our spiritual ascension, which consists in the elevation of our thoughts and affections to heavenly things.

Lessons of the Ascension. 1. The merit of our faith is greatly increased by the Ascension of our Lord, — "blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed" (John xx. 29). In to-day's Gospel Christ upbraids the incredulity of the disciples and says that they who believe not shall be condemned. 2. The Ascension increases our hope. 3. It elevates and ennobles our love of Christ. 4. The Ascension is the end and completion of all the mysteries of our Lord's life, and should be celebrated with joy and gladness by all Christians.

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part I

Article VI of the Creed

He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

Triumph of the Ascension, how to be celebrated by Christians

He ascended into Heaven. Filled with the Spirit of God, and contemplating the blessed and glorious ascension of our Lord into heaven, the prophet David exhorts all to celebrate that splendid triumph with the greatest joy and gladness. "Clap your hands," said he, "all ye nations: shout unto God with the voice of joy. . . . God is ascended with jubilee, and the Lord with the sound of trumpet."[1] The pastor will hence learn the obligation im-

[1] Ps. xlvi. 1, 6.

posed on him of explaining this mystery with unremitting assiduity, and of taking especial care that the faithful not only see it with the light of faith, and of the understanding, but still more, that, as far as it is in his power to accomplish, they make it their study, with the divine assistance, to reflect its image in their lives and actions.

FIRST PART OF THE ARTICLE; WHAT IT TEACHES US TO BELIEVE

With regard, then, to the exposition of this sixth Article, which has reference principally to the divine mystery of the ascension, we shall begin with its first part, and point out its force and meaning. That Jesus Christ, having fully accomplished the work of redemption, ascended as man, body and soul, into heaven, the faithful are unhesitatingly to believe; for as God He never forsook heaven, filling as He does all places with His divinity.

The pastor is also to teach that He ascended by His own power, not by the power of another, as did Elias, who was taken up into heaven in a fiery chariot;[1] or, as the prophet Habacuc;[2] or Philip, the deacon, who were borne through the air by the divine power, and traversed the distant regions of the earth.[3] Neither did He ascend into heaven solely by the exercise of His supreme power as God, but also by virtue of the power which He possessed as man; although human power alone was insufficient to raise Him from the dead, yet the virtue with which the blessed soul of Christ was endowed was capable of moving the body as it pleased, and His body, now glorified, readily obeyed its impulsive dominion. Hence, we believe that Christ ascended into heaven as God and man by His own power. We now come to the second part of the Article.

SECOND PART OF THE ARTICLE — A TROPE

Sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. In these words we observe a trope, that is, the changing of a word from its literal to a figurative meaning — a thing not unfrequent in Scripture,[4] when, accommodating its language to human ideas,

[1] 4 Kings ii. 11.
[2] Dan. xiv. 35.
[3] Acts viii. 39.
[4] Dionys. Areop. Epist. ix.

it attributes human affections and human members to God, who, spirit as He is, admits of nothing corporeal. But as among men he who sits at the right hand is considered to occupy the most honorable place, so, transferring the idea to celestial things, to express the glory which Christ as man enjoys above all others, we confess that He sits at the right hand of his Eternal Father.

WHAT THE WORD "SITTETH" MEANS HERE

This, however, does not imply position and figure of body, but declares the firm and permanent possession of royal and supreme power and glory which He received from the Father; as the Apostle says: "raising him up from the dead, and setting him on his right hand in the heavenly places, above all principality, and power, and virtue, and domination, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he hath subjected all things under his feet."[1] These words manifestly imply that this glory belongs to our Lord in so special a manner that it cannot apply to the nature of any other created being; and hence in another place the Apostle asks: "To which of the angels said he at any time: Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool?"[2]

HISTORY OF THE ASCENSION

But the pastor will explain the sense of the Article more at large by detailing the history of the ascension, of which the Evangelist St. Luke has left us an admirable description in the Acts of the Apostles.[3] In his exposition he will observe, in the first place, that all other mysteries refer to the ascension as to their end and completion. As all the mysteries of religion commence with the Incarnation of our Lord, so His sojourn on earth terminates with His ascension into heaven. Moreover, the other Articles of the Creed which regard Christ the Lord show His great humility and lowliness. Nothing can be conceived more humble, nothing more lowly, than that the Son of God assumed the frailty of our flesh, suffered and died for us; but nothing more magnifi-

[1] Eph. i. 20–22; Athan. Serm. 1 contra Arian.; Basil. lib. de Spir. Sanct. c. vi.

[2] Heb. i. 13.

[3] Acts i.

cently, nothing more admirably, proclaims his sovereign glory and divine majesty than what is contained in the present and preceding Articles, in which we declare that He rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now sits at the right hand of his Eternal Father.

REASONS OF THE ASCENSION

When the pastor has accurately explained these truths he will next inform the faithful why our Lord ascended into heaven. He ascended because the glorious kingdom of the highest heavens, not the obscure abode of this earth, presented a suitable dwelling place to Him whose glorified body, rising from the tomb, was clothed with immortality. He ascended, not only to possess the throne of glory and the kingdom which He purchased at the price of His blood, but also to attend to whatever regards the salvation of His people. He ascended to prove thereby that His "kingdom is not of this world,"[1] for the kingdoms of this world are earthly and transient, and are based upon wealth and the power of the flesh; but the kingdom of Christ is not, as the Jews expected, an earthly, but a spiritual and eternal kingdom. Its riches, too, are spiritual, as He shows by placing His throne in the heavens, where they who seek most earnestly the things that are of God abound most in riches and in abundance of all good things, according to these words of St. James: "Hath not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him?"[2]

He also ascended into heaven in order to teach us to follow Him thither in mind and heart, for as by his death and resurrection He bequeathed to us an example of dying and rising again in spirit, so by His ascension He teaches us, though dwelling on earth, to raise ourselves in thought and desire to heaven, confessing that we are "pilgrims and strangers on the earth,"[3] seeking a country, "fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God,"[4] for, says the same Apostle, "our conversation is in heaven."[5]

The extent and unspeakable greatness of the blessings which

[1] John xviii. 36. [2] James ii. 5. [3] Heb. xi. 13, 14.
[4] Eph. ii. 19. [5] Philip. iii. 20.

the bounty of God has bestowed on us with a lavish hand were long before, as the Apostle interprets the Psalmist, sung by David: "Ascending on high, he led captivity captive: he gave gifts to men."[1] On the tenth day after His ascension He sent down the Holy Ghost, with whose power and plenitude He filled the multitude of the faithful then present, and fulfilled His splendid promise: "It is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."[2]

He also ascended into heaven, according to the Apostle, "that he may appear . . . in the presence of God for us,"[3] and discharge for us the office of advocate with the Father. "My little children," says St. John, "these things I write to you, that you may not sin. But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just: and he is the propitiation for our sins."[4] There is nothing from which the faithful should derive greater joy than from the reflection that Jesus Christ is constituted our advocate and intercessor with the Father, with whom His influence and authority are supreme.

Finally, by His ascension He has prepared for us a place, as He had promised, and has entered, as our head, in the name of us all, into the possession of the glory of heaven.[5] Ascending into heaven, He threw open its gates, which had been closed by the sin of Adam: and, as He foretold His disciples at His last supper, secured to us a way by which we may arrive at eternal happiness. In order to demonstrate this by the event, He introduced with Himself into the mansions of eternal bliss the souls of the just whom He had liberated from prison.

ITS OTHER ADVANTAGES

A series of important advantages followed in the train of this admirable profusion of celestial gifts. In the first place, the merit of our faith was considerably augmented, because faith has for its object those things which fall not under the senses, but are far raised above the reach of human reason and intelligence. If,

[1] Ps. lxvii. 19; Eph. iv. 8.
[2] John xvi. 7; Acts i. 4, 5.
[3] Heb. ix. 24.
[4] 1 John ii. 1, 2.
[5] John xiv. 2.

therefore, the Lord had not departed from us, the merit of our faith would not be the same, for Jesus Christ has said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed."[1] In the next place, it contributes much to confirm our hope. Believing that Christ, as man, ascended into heaven, and placed our nature at the right hand of God the Father, we are animated with a strong hope that we, as members, shall also ascend thither, to be there united to our head, according to these words of our Lord Himself: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me."[2]

Another most important advantage flowing from the ascension is, that it elevates our affections to heaven and inflames them with the Spirit of God; for most truly has it been said that where our treasure is, there also is our heart.[3] And indeed were Christ the Lord still dwelling on earth, the contemplation of His person and the enjoyment of His presence would absorb all our thoughts, and we should view the author of such blessings only as man, and cherish towards Him a sort of earthly affection; but by His ascension into heaven He has spiritualized our affection for Him, and has made us venerate and love as God Him who, now absent, is the object of our thoughts, not of our senses. This we learn in part from the example of the Apostles, who, while our Lord was personally present with them, seemed to judge of Him in some measure humanly, and in part from these words of our Lord Himself: "It is expedient to you that I go."[4] The affection with which they loved Him when present was to be perfected by divine love, and that by the coming of the Holy Ghost; and therefore He immediately subjoins: "If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you."

Besides, He thus enlarged His dwelling-place on earth, that is His Church, which was to be governed by the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and left Peter, the prince of the Apostles, as chief pastor, and supreme head upon earth of the universal Church. "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors";[5] and thus seated at the right hand of the Father He continually

[1] John xx. 29. [2] John xvii. 24. [3] Matt. vi. 21.
[4] John xvi. 7. [5] Eph. iv. 11.

bestows different gifts on different men. According to the words of St. Paul, "To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ." [1]

Finally, what was already said of His death and resurrection the faithful will deem not less true of His ascension; for although we owe our redemption and salvation to the passion of Christ, whose merits opened heaven to the just, yet His ascension is not only proposed to us as a model, which teaches us to look on high and ascend in spirit into heaven, but also imparts to us a divine virtue which enables us to accomplish what it teaches.

Sermon

The Ascension of Our Lord

BY THE REV. WM. GRAHAM

In the beautiful panorama of hill country that unrolls to the eye of a pilgrim looking eastward from Jerusalem there is no point of view so picturesque or at the same time so rich in sacred memories, as Mount Olivet. Rough and narrow is the stony path winding to its summit, but its many associations more than repay the cost of ascent. On its lower slopes lies the Garden of Olives, lovingly tended by the Franciscan Fathers, who point out the spots in and around where Christ's agony and prayer began and ended. The brook Cedron that He crossed with His disciples on the sad night of His betrayal He must also have passed in His risen body on His way to the hill, whence while they looked on He was raised up. Alas! a Mohammedan mosque now crowns the spot, and the followers of the prophet point out by favor a stone bearing the imprint of a foot, which, piety suggests, was left by the ascending Christ. Even they, however, reverence the spot consecrated by the last steps on earth of the great prophet Issa.

Since the day when St. Helena built a splendid church on the Holy Hill, whence the "new ark of alliance" was carried to the "royal city that is above," the Church has, every year, on the feast we keep to-day, solemnly expressed her belief in this final

[1] Eph. iv. 7.

manifestation of Him who "showed himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God" (Acts i. 3). "Forty hours," says St. Thomas, "He lay a corpse in the tomb, and forty days he walked and talked among His friends."

We all are "glad and rejoice" to-day in the glory of our crucified and risen Saviour, and our thoughts mount to the rising, cloud-encircling form of the conquering and triumphant Christ as, clothed in His human nature, He moves towards "light inaccessible." In the joy we feel in His victory over sin and death, we realize the force of His parting words: "If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father" (John xiv. 28). Heaven, not earth, was His true goal and resting-place, once He had risen from the grave. It was only out of condescension to the needs of the infant Church that He tarried forty days on earth.

So when His task was over, the Creator and Builder of the "new Israel of God" ascended from Olivet in all the glory and splendor of His risen manhood. He rose to heaven, not like Enoch or Elias or Habacuc, by virtue of a power not theirs, but by His own. He rose to heaven, not paradise, which, in the perpetual "vision of God," He had never left. In heaven above, we are told, He "sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty," to indicate the eternal rest or peace of the blessed; and His position as man, of superiority over all created beings — a human way at best of expressing superhuman thoughts. To us, brethren, all this is hard, objective fact, not merely subjective and evanescent fancy. Earnestly do we say with the psalmist: "Therefore my heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced: moreover my flesh also shall rest in hope. Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; nor wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption" (Ps. xv. 9, 10).

As we follow in imagination the track of our glorified Saviour mounting to the skies, two lines of thought occur to the mind, one suggesting feelings of joy and gladness in the triumph of the conquering Christ, the other of gratitude in that He made His departure the condition of priceless benefits to ourselves. "But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go" (John xvi.

7). There is therefore (1) the impersonal note of joy in His glory, and (2) the personal one of gladness, that He hath not left us orphans, but in mind and spirit and sacramental form is with us still, and that he hath gone to prepare a place for us; and as the Lamb slain before the throne of God liveth to make perpetual intercession for us.

I. The thought that takes rank before all others in the truly Christian heart is one of intense joy at the proclaimed glory, the vindicated honor, the crowned sufferings of Jesus Christ. With the holy enthusiasm of the Psalmist we seem to say: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, . . . and the King of Glory shall enter in" (Ps. xxiii. 7). Three and forty days before, He was as a sheep thrown over to the wolves. In the anguish of the passion He was mocked, scourged, and buffeted. He had "trodden the winepress alone," and of the nations — aye, even of His own friends — "there was not a man" with him (Isa. lxiii. 3). "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe" (Isa. lxiii. 1). Alas! He became as "a leper," "a worm, and no man," "a man of sorrows." Why then was his apparel red, and His "garments like theirs that tread in the winepress?" Who looked about, "and there was none to help." Who sought, "and there was none to give aid" (Isa. lxiii. 2, 5). But we are glad, "for winter is now past, the rain" [of sorrows] is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land, "the voice of God's loved one is sweet, and His face comely" (Cant. ii. 11–14). "Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord: or who shall stand in his holy place?" Surely "the innocent in hands, and clean of heart. . . . He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God his saviour" (Ps. xxiii. 3–5).

We all glory to-day in that Christ's life of humiliation is over, the bitter cup of woe has been drained to the dregs. The "man of sorrows" has given place to the form "beautiful amongst the sons of men"; the new David, clad in the vesture of glorified humanity, victorious over the Goliath of sin and death, mounts through trackless space thronged by an escort of ministering angels; and we worship God in heartfelt gladness, who has thus changed deepest sorrow into highest joy, and has so honored "the

lowness of our common human nature." "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death. . . . For which cause God also hath exalted him" (Phil. ii. 8, 9).

There is no higher object of thought than God; no worthier nor more interesting subject of reflection than the life of the Incarnate God, and the phases of His divine unveiling, from the earliest prophecy to His ascension into heaven. It is study and prayer and the highest form of worship combined. It is a frame of mind that, pondering on the glory of the ascending Christ, finds expression in that great outburst of song and knowledge and adoration — the *Gloria in excelsis*, — We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we thank Thee, not for what Thou hast done for us, but for what Thou art in Thyself, apart from and independent of creatures, and what Thou wouldst have been, even if created intelligence had never learned to know or love. Then *Propter magnam gloriam Tuam*. We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory. It is in this spirit of reverent and impersonal worship that we should consider the mystery honored in to-day's feast. We rejoice not for what God does to us, but for what He is in Himself. In this way do we lose sight of our own individuality, and mingle our praises with the great stream of melody that flows fast by "the throne of God and of the Lamb."

II. Our first tribute of love and duty, therefore, to the ascending Christ is one of unselfish and impersonal triumph in His glory; our next, a personal outpouring of gratitude for the blessings accruing to us from His departure. Time and experience have verified His own authoritative words, "It is expedient to you that I go" (John xvi. 7). And yet these words must have sounded strange when first heard on the eve of His Passion, and echoed much more strangely on Olivet as they raised their tear-dimmed eyes towards the cloud enwrapping their Master as He soared aloft. He had been all in all to them. He had instilled into them unlimited and unquestioning confidence in His person, so that He was the very centre and pivot of their lowly lives. No eastern king was more absolute in his kingdom. He had exacted unreasoning faith in His office and mission; all the more so, as they were dimly conscious of what His mission and office were. His demands on their credulity, as we should say nowa-

days, were startling in their boldness. Light and leading, hope and saving for body and soul, they were to seek trustfully in Him. They built upon His presence and guardianship all the more as He had detached them from relatives, business, and human friendship; and indeed, though not appearing to know fully who He was, yet they felt in the words of their spokesman Peter, that He had "the words of eternal life," and to whom else, then, could they go? Yet now, He tells them, it is expedient He should leave them — His weak, sorrowing, inconsolable followers. It is like a captain or pilot telling an inexperienced crew just putting out to sea that his departure is desirable; a father leaving a young, helpless family on the threshold of life; a trusted teacher quitting his pupils just as their minds are opening to his lessons; a shepherd leaving his sheep in the midst of wolves, and saying that the flock will fare better in his absence. But "my thoughts are not your thoughts; nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord." Our Lord's short life — representing the Godhead visibly — closing with the Ascension, was as a seed dropped into the earth, and springing up and bearing fruit more than a hundredfold. In our shortsightedness, perhaps, we are inclined to think that in the visible presence and companionship of the Incarnate Word on earth religion would irresistibly sweep through men's souls. But, like the disciples, we know Him whom we have believed, and are convinced that the gifts He left behind and sent on His departure far transcend in value the hearing and seeing with carnal eyes and ears, and handling with bodily contact the word of life. Is He not clearer and surer to the eye of faith to-day than to the fallible impression of sense were He still among us in the flesh? Has not the Church gained rather than lost by His departure? Is not her membership increased by twice as many millions as were the individuals composing the timid band that awaited the coming of the Holy Ghost on the first Pentecost? Is there a jot or tittle lost of the recorded sayings and doings of the Master? And do they not come home to us after nineteen centuries with greater force and unction and insight than to those who saw and heard them? Is He not better known and loved and served in the new "Israel of God" than in the old? Are not our Marthas and Marys as earnest and fervent in work and

prayer as were the sisters of Lazarus, whom He called forth from the grave? Are the dauntless missionaries of the cross, who witness to Christ either at home, to a scoffing and scorning generation of unbelievers who *have* heard, or abroad, to those who *have not* heard, less zealous or laborious than those who were told out of Christ's own lips to go and preach the gospel to all nations? But we could see Him and hear Him and even touch "the hem of his garment," you will say. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." Faith is a safe avenue to Christ. The mother of the Zebedees saw and heard Jesus in the flesh, yet how low and earthly her views of His kingdom put side by side with those of a Catherine of Sienna or St. Theresa?

In these and many other ways impalpable and unseen we realize the expediency of our Lord's departure. The loss of His visible presence was the Church's gain. It was God's will He should be known, felt, understood, and valued when gone. How truly did He say of Himself, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John xiii. 7). To each age, as the gaze of Christendom is riveted on His life and character, and mind and heart strain forward to comprehend what Jesus said and did, the words of St. John are verified, "These things his disciples did not know at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things to him" (John xii. 16). He did not leave us orphans. He ascended on high to obtain gifts for men, and foremost among them all, the gift of the Holy Ghost. Pentecost is the completion and revelation of the hidden meaning of the ascension. We need not dive into reasons why the departure of Christ should be a fountain of blessing to men, or why there should be any connection at all between the coming down of the Holy Ghost and the going away of our Lord. One thing we are sure of, and it is that this connection is a necessary one, inasmuch as our Lord says, "If I go not away, the comforter will not come." The advent of the Holy Spirit was the first fruits of our Lord's ascension. His special function or office is to be the Church's soul or vital principle, manifesting Himself in speech and action till the end of time. Not that our Lord

ceased to be with His Church. His departure in His human form intensified His real though unseen presence. He withdrew in the flesh to return in the spirit. He is among us "all days, even to the end of the world," not only as an influence by the example of the holy life He led and the far-reaching grace and unction of His moral teaching, but, *personally*, in the fulness of His *humanity*, in this Blessed Sacrament; and as God, in the Third Person of the adorable Trinity, in the plenitude of the Holy Ghost poured out at Pentecost, and still brooding over and quickening with life the Church as a body and her members singly. The work of sanctification and enlightenment still goes on. The Spirit that Christ sent to be the soul of His mystical body is ever bringing back to consciousness the words and mind of Jesus, and applying them to the needs and wants of passing time. Teachers and doctors and Popes and councils make known to fresh generations of men the thoughts and meaning of the Lord, ever drawing from the treasure of Him who was the way, the truth, and the light, things new and old, ever speaking as those "having authority": in the words of the first council at Jerusalem, as "seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us." In the Ascension, it is true, Jesus was removed from sight but revealed in faith; and faith brings the invisible God nearer to us than bodily eye or ear. If, then, we rejoice and are glad to-day in our Christian inheritance, if we trust our spiritual guides as men "taught of God," if we are sure with the highest form of certainty that Christ's words "shall not pass away," if we live on the new "Mount Zion," the city of the living God, are dwellers in His holy house, shaken by fire and wind, and filled by the inrush of the descending Spirit, if the Lord is truly our shepherd and feeds us in green pastures, we owe it to the solemn uprising and departure of our beloved Lord from Olivet.

Furthermore, by His solemn entry into heaven Christ opened the gates of heaven closed against the race by sin. We are immortal spirits in perishable bodies, and our place since redemption, and by virtue of it, is heaven. The Head of the great body we belong to is there, and to be members of this body, the Church triumphant, we are destined. Man, it is true, is part of nature, its head and chief; but he is more. By the grace of God, he can

transcend it. Nature, too, and man's nature particularly, is beautiful, as all the handiwork of God is; but grace is distinct from and superior to it. Man thereby is raised to a state or condition above nature, its capacities and its possibilities. Now, the natural term, or goal, so to say, of this new or higher state, "this new creation," this "new creature," as St. Paul describes it, is heaven. Lost and closed by sin, it has been regained and reopened in the Ascension of Christ "who led captivity captive" (Eph. iv. 8). "I go," said He to His disciples, "to prepare a place for you, . . . that where I am, you also may be" (John xiv. 3).

Nor is His presence in heaven inactive in our regard. His presence there is an intense, perpetual act of intercessory prayer for us. He pleads unceasingly for us, and His intercession gives worth and value to our own. The wounds in hand and foot and side, the pierced heart, cry for pity to the throne of God: "For Jesus is not entered into the holies made with hands, . . . but into heaven itself, that he may appear now in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24). "Having therefore a great high priest that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God: . . . let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace" (Heb. iv. 14, 16).

Conclusion. We have been dealing to-day with facts and inferences which, in view of the aims and pursuits that occupy the world of our times, may seem strange and unmeaning, the echoes almost of an unknown and unintelligible tongue. It is like going up into cloudland. The words of the angel to the disciples are often said to us in reproach: "Men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven?" This Jesus is taken away from you as any other. Look down to earth. It is the only heaven we are sure of. Seek not the things that are above as empty gazers of the sky. Look only to the visible and the present. This is the gospel we often hear preached to-day, and which finds, alas! a ready echo in many a heart. Faith and hope and love based on heavenly motion are the transcendent gifts of the Holy Ghost seen spurned or neglected. The natural man understandeth not the things that are of God. A holy life, a supernatural life, is deemed visionary, idle, superstitious. If there is to be any virtue

at all, it is to be only within the sphere of sense and nature to round and perfect both, such as the manly virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, provided they strike not deeper nor rise higher than the life that "now is."

It is idle to speak of the expediency of the Ascension or, indeed, of the supernatural at all to such as these; nor do I, except by way of warning. We live in an age of no belief, or half belief, or make belief. But the truth, "The word of the Lord endureth forever," and our attitude towards it, can make no difference. God is still in the world, behind its forces, and guiding and controlling them, even though men neither see nor believe in Him. Men and women are still His creatures, the works of His hands — adorned with grace and destined for glory. We are on earth, it is true, but our eyes and heads, aye, and hearts too, point to the skies. No sophist, nor school of sophists, with all their arts of style and argument, have ever yet persuaded mankind at large that life ends at the grave, and that the happiness we crave and strive for and can never reach on earth is an empty dream, never to be realized. No! God made nothing in vain. We are made and destined for a higher, larger, and nobler life than the present, of which the Ascension forcibly reminds us. It reminds us, too, of the life of grace, the life of true, pure holiness over and above mere natural rectitude, a necessary precedent to the life of glory; and which our Lord, by withdrawing Himself visibly, enables us, if we will, to live.

Let us therefore lift up our hearts to heaven where Christ has gone "to prepare a place for us." We have not seen Him ascend; but we know by faith He is there. He is the head of the mystic body of which we are members, and limbs should join the head. "Ubi caput praecessit ibi spes vocatur et corporis." Be faithful, then, to grace, lead a life not of pleasure, but of duty. Peace is only found where God placed it — in a dutiful, self-denying life. "Therefore," in the words of St. Paul, "if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God: Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. . . . When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory" (Col. iii. 1, 2, 4).

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SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

SUBJECT

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

TEXT

When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me. — JOHN XV. 26.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION. The promise of our Lord in to-day's Gospel to send the Holy Ghost was verified in the case of the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday, when they received the grace of strength to bear testimony to Christ and His teachings. A similar grace is conferred on each of the faithful through the Sacrament of Confirmation.

I. Confirmation is a Sacrament. 1. The phrase to confirm means to strengthen. 2. The unanimous testimony of the Fathers and tradition affirm that Confirmation is a Sacrament. 3. Confirmation has all the requisites of a Sacrament: (a) it was instituted by Christ, as we know from tradition; (b) it is an outward sign and confers grace, as we shall see below. 4. Confirmation differs from Baptism: (a) it confers a different grace; (b) it has a different sign; (c) it serves a different need of the soul.

Through Baptism we are made the children of God, through Confirmation we become the soldiers of God.

II. The outward sign of Confirmation. 1. The matter of Confirmation is chrism, a mixture of olive oil and balm blessed by the Bishop. This matter most appropriately signifies the effects of the Sacrament, — the oil expresses the plenitude of divine grace which is poured out, the balsam signifies the sweet odor of virtue and preservation from the corruption of sin. 2. The form of this Sacrament is the words pronounced by the Bishop, — "I sign thee with the sign of the cross," etc. These words indicate the cause of the Sacrament, namely, the divine power, and the two effects of the Sacrament, which are spiritual strength and an indelible character. 3. The matter and form of this Sacrament are administered by the Bishop as the ordinary minister in conformity with the teaching of Scripture and tradition.

III. The inward grace of Confirmation. 1. Confirmation perfects the grace of Baptism. Baptism gives spiritual birth; Confirmation confers spiritual growth and maturity, and strengthens the soul against external assaults, as we see in the case of the Apostles after the day of Pentecost. This strengthening of the soul is symbolized by the slight blow on the cheek given by the Bishop. 2. Confirmation imprints on the soul the indelible character of a soldier of Jesus Christ, and hence this Sacrament cannot be repeated.

Exhortation. 1. On account of the dignity and utility of the Sacrament of Confirmation the faithful should be anxious to receive it, and to receive it with great piety and devotion. 2. Although this Sacrament is not absolutely necessary for salvation, no one may neglect it, if there be an opportunity of receiving it. Pastors are obliged to see that those under their care are confirmed (Code, can. 787).

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part II

The Sacrament of Confirmation

URGENT NECESSITY OF EXPLAINING THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION IN THESE DAYS

If ever there was a time that demanded the assiduity of the pastor in explaining the Sacrament of Confirmation it is doubtless the present, when there are found in the Church of God many by whom it is altogether omitted, while very few study to derive from it the fruit of divine grace which its worthy reception imparts. That this divine blessing, therefore, may not seem through their fault and to the serious injury of their immortal souls to have been conferred in vain, the faithful are to be instructed on Whitsunday, and on such other days as the pastor shall deem convenient, regarding the nature, efficacy, and dignity of this Sacrament, so as to make them sensible that not only is it not to be neglected, but that it is to be approached with the greatest reverence and devotion.

WHY CALLED CONFIRMATION

To begin, therefore, with its name, the pastor will inform the faithful that this Sacrament is called Confirmation because if no obstacle is opposed to its efficacy, the person who receives it — when anointed with the sacred chrism by the hand of the Bishop, who accompanies the unction with these words: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" — is confirmed in strength by receiving new virtue, and becomes a perfect soldier of Christ.[1]

CONFIRMATION A SACRAMENT

That Confirmation has all the conditions of a true Sacrament has been at all times the doctrine of the Catholic Church, as Pope Melchiades[2] and many other very holy and ancient pontiffs expressly declare. The truth of this doctrine St. Clement could not

[1] Conc. Aur. c. 3, and Flor.
[2] Epist. ad Episcop. Hispan. c. 2, ep. 4, near the end.

have confirmed in stronger terms than when he said: "All should hasten without delay to be born again to God, and then to be sealed by the Bishop, that is, to receive the sevenfold gift of the Holy Ghost. For, as we have learned from St. Peter and as the other Apostles taught in obedience to the command of our Lord, he who contumeliously and not from necessity, but voluntarily, neglects to receive this Sacrament, cannot possibly become a perfect Christian."[1] This same doctrine has been confirmed, as may be seen in their decrees, by Popes Urban, Fabian, and Eusebius, pontiffs who, animated with the same spirit, shed their blood for the name of Christ. It is also fortified by the unanimous testimony of the Fathers, among whom Denis the Areopagite, Bishop of Athens, teaching how to consecrate and make use of the holy ointment, says: "The priest clothes the person baptized with a garment emblematic of his purity, in order to conduct him to the Bishop; and the Bishop signing him with the holy and divine ointment, makes him partaker of the most holy communion."[2] Of such importance does Eusebius of Caesarea deem this Sacrament that he hesitates not to say that the heretic Novatus could not receive the Holy Ghost, because, having received Baptism, he was not, when visited by severe illness, sealed with the sign of chrism.[3] On this subject we might adduce testimonies the most conclusive from St. Ambrose in his book on the Initiated,[4] and from St. Augustine in his works against the epistles of the Donatist Petilian. So convinced were they that no doubt could exist as to the reality of this Sacrament that they not only taught the doctrine, but confirmed its truth by many passages of Scripture, the one applying to it these words of the Apostle: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God: whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption";[5] the other, these words of the Psalmist: "like the precious ointment on the head, that ran down upon the beard . . . of Aaron,"[6] and also these words of the same Apostle: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us."[7]

[1] The decrees of these Popes are found in de consecrat. dist. 5.
[2] S. Dionysius de Eccles. Hierar. c. 2. [3] Lib. 6, histor. cap. 43.
[4] Lib. de iis qui myst. initiantur. c. 7, lib. 2, c. 104.
[5] Eph. iv. 2. [6] Ps. cxxxii. 2.
[7] Rom. v. 5. That Confirmation is a Sacrament is proved also from

CONFIRMATION ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM BAPTISM

Confirmation, although said by Melchiades to have a most intimate connection with Baptism,[1] is yet an entirely different Sacrament. The diversity of the grace which each Sacrament confers, and the diversity of the external sign employed to signify that grace, obviously constitute them different Sacraments. As by the grace of Baptism we are begotten to newness of life, and by that of Confirmation grow to full maturity, having "put away the things of a child,"[2] we can sufficiently comprehend that the same difference which exists in the natural order between birth and growth exists also in the supernatural between Baptism, which regenerates, and Confirmation, which imparts full growth and perfect spiritual strength.

Again, if the new difficulties which the soul has to encounter demand the aid of a new and distinct Sacrament, it is obvious that as we have occasion for the grace of baptism to stamp upon the soul the impress of the true faith, so it is of the utmost advantage that a new grace fortify us with such intrepidity of soul that no danger, no dread of pains, tortures, death, should have power to deter us from the profession of the true faith. Hence, Pope Melchiades marks the difference between them with minute accuracy in these terms: "In Baptism," says he, "the Christian is enlisted into the service, in Confirmation he is equipped for battle; at the baptismal font the Holy Ghost imparts the plenitude of innocence, in confirmation the perfection of grace; in Baptism we are regenerated to life, after Baptism we are fortified for the combat; in Baptism we are cleansed, in Confirmation we are strengthened; regeneration saves by its own efficacy those who receive Baptism in peace, Confirmation arms and prepares for the conflict."[3] These are truths not only recorded by other Councils, but specially defined by the Council of Trent, and we are therefore no longer at liberty not only

Ambros. de Sacr. lib. 3, c. 2; lib. de Spiritu Sancto, c. 6, 7; Aug. de Trinit. lib. 15, c. 26; in epist. Joan tract. 3, 6; in Psalmis 26; and especially from Tertul. lib. de Resurr. car.; Cypr. epist. 7; Origen, hom. 9, in Levit.; Jerome, contr. Lucif.; Cyril of Jerusalem, Catech. 3.

[1] Epist. ad Episc. Hisp. towards the middle.

[2] 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

[3] Loco citato.

to dissent from but even to entertain the least doubt regarding them.[1]

INSTITUTED BY CHRIST

But to impress the faithful with a deeper sense of the sanctity of this Sacrament the pastor will make known to them by whom it was instituted, — the importance of which knowledge with regard to all the Sacraments we have already pointed out. He will accordingly inform them that not only was it instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, but as St. Fabian, Bishop of Rome, testifies, the chrism and the words used in its administration were also appointed by him, — a fact of easy proof to those who believe confirmation to be a Sacrament, for all the sacred mysteries are beyond the power of man and could have been instituted by God alone.[2]

ITS MATTER IS CHRISM

We now come to treat of the component parts of this Sacrament, and, first, of its matter. The matter of Confirmation is chrism, a word borrowed from the Greek language, and which, although used by profane writers to designate any sort of ointment, is appropriated by ecclesiastical usage to signify ointment composed of oil and balsam, and solemnly consecrated by episcopal benediction. A mixture of oil and balsam, therefore, constitutes the matter of confirmation; and this mixture of different elements at once expresses the manifold graces of the Holy Ghost and the excellence of this Sacrament. That such is its matter the Church and her councils have uniformly taught; and the same doctrine has been handed down to us by St. Denis, and by many other Fathers of authority too great to be questioned, particularly by Pope Fabian,[3] who testifies that the Apostles received the composition of chrism from our Lord and transmitted it to us.[4]

[1] Laod. can. 48, Meld. c. 6; Florence, Constance, Trent, sess. 7.

[2] Epist. 2, in the beginning.

[3] Epist. 3, ad Episc. Orient.

[4] See Aug. in Ps. 44, vers. 9; lib. 13, de Trinit. cap. 26; Greg. in 1, cap. can. Conc. Laod. cap. 48; Carth. 2, 3, c. 39; Dionys. de Eccl. Hierar. cc. 2, 4. On the oil see Ambr. in Ps. 118; lib. de Spiritu Sancto, cap. 3; Cyprian Epist. 70.

PROPRIETY OF CHRISM AS ITS MATTER

To declare the effects of Confirmation no sacramental matter could have been more appropriate than chrism. Oil, by its nature unctuous and fluid, expresses the plenitude of divine grace which flows from Christ the head, through the Holy Ghost, and is poured out, "like the precious ointment on the head, that ran down upon the beard . . . of Aaron, . . . to the skirt of his garment";[1] for God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows,[2] and "of his fulness we all have received."[3] Balsam, too, the odor of which is most grateful, signifies that the faithful, made perfect by the grace of Confirmation, diffuse around them, by reason of their many virtues, such a sweet odor that they may truly say with the Apostle, "We are the good odor of Christ unto God."[4] Balsam has also the quality of preserving incorrupt whatever it embalms — a quality well adapted to express the virtue of this Sacrament. Prepared by the heavenly grace infused in Confirmation, the souls of the faithful may be easily preserved from the corruption of sin.

CHRISM, WHY CONSECRATED, AND BY BISHOPS ONLY

The chrism is consecrated with solemn ceremonies by the Bishop. That this its solemn consecration is in accordance with the instructions of our Lord, when at His last supper He committed to His Apostles the manner of making chrism, we learn from Pope Fabian, a man eminently distinguished by his sanctity and by the glory of martyrdom.[5] Indeed, reason alone demonstrates the propriety of this consecration; for in most of the other Sacraments Christ so instituted the matter as to impart to it holiness. It was not only His will that water should constitute the matter of the Sacrament of Baptism when He said, "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,"[6] but He also, at His own baptism, imparted to it the power of sanctifying. "The water of Baptism," says St. Chrysostom, "had it not been

[1] Ps. cxxxii. 2, 3.
[2] Ps. xliv. 8.
[3] John i. 16.
[4] 2 Cor. ii. 15.
[5] Pope St. Fabian, as above.
[6] John iii. 5.

sanctified by contact with the body of our Lord, could not cleanse the sins of believers."[1] As therefore our Lord did not consecrate by using the matter of Confirmation, it becomes necessary to consecrate it by holy and devout prayer, which is the exclusive prerogative of Bishops, who are constituted the ordinary ministers of this Sacrament.

FORM OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

The other component part of this Sacrament, that is to say, its form, comes next to be explained. The faithful are to be admonished that when receiving Confirmation they are, on hearing the words pronounced by the Bishop, earnestly to excite themselves to sentiments of piety, faith, and devotion, that on their part no obstacle may be opposed to the heavenly grace of the Sacrament. The form of Confirmation consists of these words: "I SIGN THEE WITH THE SIGN OF THE CROSS, AND I CONFIRM THEE WITH THE CHRISM OF SALVATION, IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST." Were we to acknowledge the incompetency of reason to establish the truth and strict propriety of this form, the authority of the Catholic Church, by which it has been at all times taught and recognized, would alone be sufficient to dispel all doubt on the subject; judging of it, however, by the standard of reason, we arrive at the same conclusion. The form of the Sacrament should embrace whatever is necessary to explain its nature and substance. With regard to the nature and substance of Confirmation there are three things that demand particular attention: the divine power, which, as a primary cause, operates in the Sacrament; the spiritual strength which it imparts to the faithful unto salvation; and lastly, the sign impressed on him who is to engage in the warfare of Christ. The words "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," with which the form closes, sufficiently declare the first; the second is comprised in the words, "I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation;" and the words, "I sign thee with the sign of the cross," with which the form opens, convey the third.

[1] Hom. 4, oper. imperf.; also de consec. dist. 4, c. Nunquid.

THE BISHOP IS ITS ORDINARY MINISTER

To whom principally is intrusted the administration of this Sacrament is a matter to which the pastor will also call the attention of the faithful. There are many, according to the Prophet, who run and yet are not sent; and hence the necessity of informing the faithful who are its true and legitimate ministers, in order that they may really receive the Sacrament and grace of Confirmation.[1] That Bishops alone are the ordinary ministers of this Sacrament is the doctrine of Scripture. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that when Samaria had received the Gospel, Peter and John were sent to them and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; "for he was not as yet come upon any of them; but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."[2] Here we find that he who administered Baptism, having only attained the degree of deacon, had no power to administer Confirmation; its administration was reserved to a more elevated order of the ministry, that is, to the Apostles alone. Whenever the sacred Scriptures speak of this Sacrament they convey to us the same truth. We have also the clearest testimony of the Fathers, and, as may be seen, in the decrees of Popes Urban, Eusebius, Damasus, Innocent, and Leo. In confirmation of the same doctrine, we may also add that St. Augustine loudly complains of the corrupt practice which prevailed in the churches of Egypt and Alexandria in his day, a practice according to which priests presumed to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation.[3]

PROPRIETY OF RESTRICTING CONFIRMATION TO BISHOPS

To illustrate the propriety of restricting the exercise of this function to the episcopal office the following comparison may

[1] C. of Trent, sess. 23, c. 4, can. 7.

[2] Acts viii. 14, 16.

[3] That the Bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation is taught by Pope Urban, Epist. ad omnes Christianos; Pope Eusebiuus, Epist. 3, ad Episcop. Tusciae et Campaniae; Pope Damasus, Epist. 4, ad Pros. et caeteros Episc. Orthod.; Pope Innocent, Epist. 1, ad Veren. c. 3; Pope Leo, Epist. 88, ad Germanae et Galliae. Episc.; Pope Melchiades, Epist. ad episc. Hispaniae; Pope Clement, Epist. 4; C. Worm., c. 8; Florence, de Sacram. The decrees of the above mentioned Popes are found in the volumes of the Councils. See also August. in quaest. novi testam. quaest. 42.

be found not inappropriate. As in the construction of an edifice, the artisans, who are inferior agents, prepare and dispose mortar, lime, timber, and the other materials, while the completion of the work belongs to the architect, so in like manner should Confirmation, which is as it were the completion of the spiritual edifice, be administered by no other than episcopal hands.

A SPONSOR REQUIRED, AND WHY

In Confirmation, as in Baptism, a sponsor is required. If the gladiator who presents himself as a combatant has need of the skill and address of a master to direct him by what thrusts and passes he may, without endangering his own safety, overcome his antagonist, how much more necessary to the faithful is a guide and instructor when, sheathed as it were in the panoply of this Sacrament, they engage in the spiritual conflict, in which eternal salvation is to reward the success of the victor! Sponsors therefore are, with great propriety, required in the administration of this Sacrament also; and the same affinity which, as we have already shown, is contracted in Baptism, impeding the lawful marriage of the parties, is also contracted in Confirmation.[1]

EFFECTS OF CONFIRMATION

The pastor will teach that in common with the other sacraments, Confirmation imparts new grace, unless some obstacle be opposed by the receiver. We have already shown that it is the property of these sacred and mystic signs at once to indicate and produce grace; and as we cannot imagine grace and sin to coexist in the soul, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that it also remits sin.

Besides these properties, common alike to this and the other sacraments, it is the peculiar characteristic of Confirmation to perfect the grace of Baptism. Those who are initiated into the Christian religion share, as it were, the tenderness and infirmity of new-born infants; but they afterwards gather strength from

[1] C. of Trent, sess. 24, c. 2, de reform. matrim. Under the law of the new Code spiritual relationship arises from valid Confirmation between the person confirmed and the sponsor (canon 797), but this relationship is not an impediment to marriage (canon 1079). — EDITORS.

the Sacrament of chrism to combat the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and are confirmed in faith to confess and glorify the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. From this last mentioned circumstance it arose, no doubt, that the Sacrament was distinguished by the name of Confirmation.

AN ERROR REFUTED

This its name is not, as some with equal ignorance and impiety have imagined, derived from a former custom that baptized persons, when grown to maturity, should present themselves before the Bishop to confirm their adherence to the faith of Christ which they had embraced in Baptism. According to such an opinion Confirmation would not seem to differ from catechetical instruction. Of such a practice no proof can be adduced, no vestige traced; and this sacrament is called Confirmation because by virtue of it God confirms in us what was commenced in Baptism, and conducts to the perfection of solid Christian virtue.[1]

Not only does this Sacrament confirm, it also increases, divine grace in the soul. "The Holy Ghost," says Melchiades, "who descends with salutary influence on the waters of Baptism, imparts the plenitude of grace to innocence; in Confirmation the same Holy Ghost gives an increase of divine grace, and not only an increase, but an increase after a wonderful manner.[2] This extraordinary efficacy of Confirmation the Scriptures beautifully express by a metaphor. "Stay you in the city," says our Lord, speaking of this Sacrament, "till you be clothed with power from on high."[3]

ITS EFFICACY ILLUSTRATED

To show the divine efficacy of this Sacrament (and this, no doubt, will have great influence on the minds of the faithful) the pastor has need only to explain the effects which it produced on the Apostles themselves. Before, and even at the very time of the passion, so weak and listless were they that no sooner was our Lord apprehended than they all fled;[4] and Peter, who

[1] C. of Trent, 7, can. 1, de confir.
[2] De cons. dist. 5, c. Spiritus. Euseb. Emus. hom. in die Pent.
[3] Luke xxiv. 49.
[4] Matt. xxvi. 56.

was destined to be the rock and foundation of the Church, and who had displayed an unshaken constancy and an intrepid spirit to be dismayed by the appearance of no danger,[1] was so terrified at the voice of one weak woman as to deny once, and again, and a third time, that he was a disciple of Jesus Christ.[2] Even after the resurrection they remained, through fear of the Jews, shut up in a house, the doors being closed.[3] But how extraordinary the change! On the day of Pentecost, filled with the grace of the Holy Ghost, they fearlessly, and in defiance of all danger, proclaim the Gospel, not only through Judea, but throughout the world;[4] they deem it the greatest happiness to be thought worthy to suffer contumely, chains, tortures, and crucifixion itself, for the name of Christ.[5]

Confirmation has also the effect of impressing a character, and hence, as we said before with regard to Baptism, and as will be more fully explained in its proper place with regard to Orders, it is on no account to be administered a second time. If these things are frequently and accurately explained, it is almost impossible that the faithful, knowing the utility and dignity of this Sacrament, should not use every exertion to receive it with piety and devotion.[6]

ITS RITES AND CEREMONIES EXPLAINED

ANOINTING OF THE FOREHEAD

The rites and ceremonies used in the administration of this Sacrament now remain to be glanced at. The advantages of this explanation the pastor will at once see by reverting to what we have already said on this subject in its proper place. The forehead of the person to be confirmed is anointed with sacred chrism; for in this Sacrament the Holy Spirit pours Himself into the souls of the faithful, and imparts to them increased strength and courage to enable them in the spiritual contest to fight manfully, and to resist successfully their most implacable foes. They are therefore told that henceforward they are not to be deterred by fear

[1] Matt. xvi. 18–26, 51.
[2] Matt. xxvi. 70, 72, 74.
[3] John xx. 19.
[4] Acts ii. 1.
[5] Acts v. 41.
[6] On the non-repetition of Confirmation, see de consecratione, dist. 5. c. dictum. est, et cap. de hom. St. Thom. p. 3, q. 72, art. 5.

or shame — feelings of which the countenance is the principal index — from the open confession of the name of Christ.[1] Besides, the mark by which the Christian is distinguished from all others, as the soldier is distinguished by his peculiar military badges, should be impressed on the forehead, the most dignified and conspicuous part of the human form.

WHY ADMINISTERED AT PENTECOST

The festival of Pentecost was also chosen for its solemn administration because the Apostles were then strengthened and confirmed by the power of the Holy Ghost;[2] and also to remind the faithful, by the recollection of that supernatural event, of the number and magnitude of the mysteries contained in that sacred unction.

THE GENTLE SLAP ON THE CHEEK

The person, when confirmed, receives a gentle slap on the cheek from the hand of the Bishop, to remind him that as a courageous champion he should be prepared to brave with unconquered resolution all adversities for the name of Christ.

THE KISS OF PEACE

Finally, he receives the kiss of peace, to give him to understand that he has been blessed with the fulness of divine grace, and with that peace "which surpasseth all understanding."[3]

These things will be found to contain a summary of the exposition to be given by the pastor on the Sacrament of Confirmation; but let them be delivered not so much in the cold language of formal instruction as in the burning accents of fervent piety, so as to penetrate into the minds and inflame the hearts of the faithful.

[1] Rhaban. lib. 1, de instit. cleric. c. 30, et habetur de consec. dist. 5, c. noviss. Aug. in Ps. 141, St. Thom. 3, p. q. 71, art. 9.
[2] Acts ii. 2, 4.
[3] Phil. iv. 7.

Sermon

Confirmation

BY THE RIGHT REV. ALEXANDER MACDONALD, D.D.

By Baptism we are born into the kingdom of God. And as, in the natural order, the child must grow to manhood before he is fit to go out into the world and fight life's battle, so it is in the spiritual order. The kingdom of God on earth is the Church militant, whose members wage a spiritual warfare as soldiers under Christ, their captain. The child of God, therefore, to be an efficient member of the Church militant, must outgrow the weakness of childhood and attain to adult age — "the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13). Confirmation is the Sacrament which enables the child of God, by the grace of God's Holy Spirit, thus to grow into a strong and perfect Christian, a soldier of Jesus Christ. The name itself implies this, for to confirm is to make strong.

Like the other sacraments of the New Law, Confirmation consists of matter and form. The matter is the anointing with holy chrism and the laying on of the hands of a bishop. The laying on of hands alone is mentioned in the New Testament, but the anointing is vouched for by the tradition of the Church. "Thus, too, in our case," says Tertullian, speaking of this Sacrament, "the unction runs [down our flesh] carnally, but profits spiritually, in the same way as the act of Baptism itself, too, is carnal, in that we are plunged in water, the effect spiritual, in that we are freed from our sins" (De Baptismo, ch. vii). The words of the form are: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The Bishop is the minister of Confirmation. A priest, however, may receive special power from the Pope to administer the Sacrament, using oil blessed by a bishop.

The subject of Confirmation is any one who has been baptized and not yet confirmed; not yet confirmed, for this Sacrament, like Baptism, imprints on the soul an indelible character, and cannot therefore be given more than once. The candidate for Confirmation, according to the present discipline of the Church

in the West, must have come to the use of reason and have some knowledge of Christian doctrine, more especially the principal mysteries of religion, the four great truths commonly spoken of as "the last things," and all that concerns this Sacrament, as well as the Sacrament of Penance, which is to be received before Confirmation. In the East children are confirmed immediately after Baptism.

The one who is to be confirmed should be in the state of grace, for Confirmation is a Sacrament of the living, and it would be sacrilege to receive it in the state of mortal sin. Still the Sacrament would be valid, and would imprint a character on the soul, but would confer no grace till pardon was first obtained for the sin.

A Sacrament is a sensible sign of grace instituted by our blessed Lord to sanctify and save souls. Three things there are thus in every Sacrament: a sensible sign, divine institution, the power of conferring grace. The sensible sign in the Sacrament of Confirmation consists in the laying on of the Bishop's hands with the anointing and the words of the form. But while a Sacrament is a sensible sign, not every sensible sign is a Sacrament. It must be divinely instituted, for no sensible sign can give grace unless it is divinely instituted for that purpose. Of this divine institution, in the case of Confirmation, there is proof at least implied in the Acts of the Apostles. There we read that the people of Samaria were won to Christ by the preaching of Philip and baptized. And when this became known to the apostles, Peter and John were sent thither, and they laid their hands on the newly baptized converts, who thereupon received the Holy Ghost. Plainly this rite, which consisted in the laying on of apostolic hands with prayer, was a Sacrament, for it conferred grace — nay, the very author of grace, the Holy Spirit. It was not Holy Orders, which it outwardly resembled, in the laying on of hands, for orders are given to men only who are elected to the ministry, and the Christians of Samaria were not all of them called to the ministry, and there were among them women and children as well as men. It follows that here was a Sacrament distinct from Baptism and from Holy Orders, the special effect of which was to give the Holy Ghost. For so we read: "Then

they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts viii. 17).

Confirmation produces a twofold effect: (1) It gives grace to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ; (2) it stamps upon the soul a character, which is like the putting on of a spiritual armor, with the livery of Our Lord and Master, to serve Him and do battle for Him and under His standard with the enemies that assail us on every side. Not that we become strong and perfect Christians all at once; not that we show from the first, or even after many years, such skill and courage in fighting the good fight as never to falter or suffer defeat. This Sacrament does not transform men all at once into saints and heroes, but it gives them grace to grow, if they will but correspond with the grace, until, as the apostle has it, they attain their full stature in Christ.

All growth is from within. You cannot force it. It is a gradual, a slow process. It is so in the natural order, it is so in the spiritual order. But there is this difference between growth in the natural order and growth in the spiritual order, that the former is confined to the period between birth and adult age, while the latter extends over the whole of one's lifetime. Nay, as a rule spiritual growth is sturdiest and surest when the season of lusty youth is over and the life of man "is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf." But whether it be in the morning of life or towards life's sunset that this growth takes place, it has ever its source in God's Holy Spirit, in the seven gifts which He bestows on the soul, and which exist in the soul, at least in germ, from the day of one's Confirmation. The fulness of these gifts was in Christ our Saviour, and of this fulness we all receive. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse," says the prophet, "and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Is. xi. 1–3).

In these words of Isaias are set forth the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, the seminal principles of which are sown in the soul by the Sacrament of Confirmation. The prophet gives them in

the order of their dignity, wisdom being first and fear last. We shall take them in the ascending order, beginning with holy fear.

The fear of the Lord is, so to say, the first step in the ladder by which the soul slowly mounts up the steep of Christian perfection.

A good many Christians seem quite unable to get beyond this first step. They are content to keep themselves just within the territory of grace, and aspire to nothing higher. They linger in the valley below; they seek not to gain the distant heights. Others, again, pass most of their lives with one foot on this lowest rung of the ladder and the other on the earth. That is to say, the holy fear of God keeps urging them forward and prompting them to bring forth fruit worthy of penance, to seek the things that are above; but the force of evil habit, and the weight of their old sins, and the lust of worldly pleasures, bear them down to earth once more. These really have not the gift of holy fear at all. They received the seed of it into their souls on the day of their Confirmation, but they soon stifled and quenched it by sinful works.

Would that the whole world were filled with the fear of the Lord! All are in need of this gift: the good, that it may prompt them to walk steadily along in the way of God's holy commandments, the wicked, that they may turn from their evil ways.

The next gift is piety, or godliness. It perfects the former gift. It takes away the sting that lurks in all fear, however holy. It changes the feeling of awe with which we look on God into one of love and confidence. Fear makes us regard God as our master and judge; piety gathers us round Him as children round a father, and bids us cry out to Him, "Our Father who art in heaven." Of this sweet gift is born the spirit of prayer, as well as reverence for all things that are holy, with meek resignation under present trials, for such as bear these patiently here. It is a priceless gift. But, alas! sin with its malign breath often blasts it just as it is putting forth its first blossoms in the virgin soil of the yet innocent heart. Hence we so often see children disappoint the promise of their early years, and grow up wayward and bold, disrespectful to parents and superiors, without reverence for God and holy things.

The third gift is knowledge. It is not enough to have the fear of displeasing God and the wish to please Him, if we know not what is pleasing to Him and what displeasing. With this knowledge the third gift supplies us. The fear of that endless misery to which sin leads makes us turn away from sin; the hope of reward and the sweetness of that peace which dwells in the heavenly home, — these draw us on. Yet powerful as these impulses are they would avail nothing if we knew not how to shun the devious ways of sin and keep our feet in the narrow way which leads to life.

But even this gift of knowledge is not enough. Many have known the way of life who have not walked therein. Like the pagan of old, they have seen the better course and approved it, but have followed the worse. The way that leads to life is long and difficult. It is, for the most part, a thorny path that lies through the wilderness of this world into the land of promise beyond the river of death, and we, poor, frail, fallen creatures that we are, are apt to falter and lose heart, to linger by the wayside, and to long once more for the flesh-pots of Egypt even though they be in the house of bondage. But our help is in the name of the Lord. His Holy Spirit is ever at hand to strengthen the feeble and help them over the hard places of the road. He brings the gift of fortitude. It is the fourth of His gifts. It turns weak and cowardly men into soldiers of Christ, who go forth to conquer their inveterate foes, the world, the flesh, and the devil. For they feel their youth and strength renewed, as did St. Paul when he cried out, "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me."

And yet the battle is not to the strong. Prudence, too, is needed, and Christian prudence is the gift of counsel. It goes before the gift of fortitude. It points out what is to be done, and how it is to be done, and how much is to be done at a time. Emboldened by the gift of fortitude we might be tempted to undertake things that are beyond our strength, or unsuited to our state in life. Here the gift of counsel both curbs and guides us. Thus in a fit of fervor a person might make a vow to avoid all sins, even venial, only to learn by sad experience that this is next to impossible: or one might be so taken up with prayer

and religious exercises as to neglect the duties of one's calling. This were piety, but ill-directed, lacking counsel.

Fear, piety, and fortitude perfect the will; knowledge and counsel, the intellect, in the practical order — that is, they enable us to know what is to be done and what is to be avoided; and as regards what is to be done, when and how, and how much at a time. There is another gift to teach us what to believe, to give us an insight into the truths of religion, to shed such light upon the deep things of God, the mysteries of our faith, as may be vouchsafed to mortals in a world where these things are seen as through a glass, darkly. It is the gift of understanding. It is of a higher order than knowledge as counsel.

> I do not ask to see
> The distant scene, — one step enough for me.

So the poet prayed, seeking, for the moment, but the "kindly light" of knowledge and counsel to guide his steps "amid the encircling gloom." Yet in the voyage of life there is need, ever and anon, of stronger light, to catch at least some passing glimpse of the distant scene. To hold his course on the trackless waste of waters the mariner must from time to time pause to take his bearings. He must lift his eyes to the heavenly bodies, the sun by day, the moon and stars by night. So we in crossing the ocean of life must raise eyes of faith to gaze upon the eternal truths, and from them seek light and guidance, else we may not hope to win the haven of eternal rest.

Lastly, there is a seventh gift that crowns the others, the blossom and perfection of all the rest, the talisman of victory to the soldier of Christ, the last round of the ladder by which the Christian mounts to heaven. It is the gift of wisdom. It is the good and perfect gift that cometh down from the Father of lights. It enables the one into whose soul it descends to see everything as God sees it, and to set its true value on everything. The wisdom of this world makes men prize the things of this world. The wisdom that is from above makes men fix their minds and hearts on the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father. And the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Men of the world deem it highest wisdom to possess themselves of the good things of

this world. St. Paul, who was full of the wisdom that is from above, reckoned all these things as dross, nay, to use his own strong word, even as dung, that he might win Christ. He had been thoroughly drilled in the school of the Holy Ghost. He had been taught to know the true beatitudes, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," "Blessed are the merciful," "Blessed are the clean of heart," "Blessed are they who endure persecution for righteousness' sake." He had fathomed the meaning of the Master's words: "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?" It is a question of profit and loss, where the loss of all things earthly, even of life itself, for Christ's sweet sake, is supremest gain.

Confirmation is, in an altogether special sense, the Sacrament of the Holy Ghost. Baptism confers grace to sanctify the soul, but Confirmation confers the sanctifier of the soul, the Holy Spirit. Ever since the day of Pentecost this Holy Spirit has been in the world, performing His mission as Paraclete, ruling the Church as a whole, guiding it in the way of truth, and sanctifying its members. Creatures of the senses that we are, and tied down to the things of sense, we find it hard to bring home to ourselves this great truth of our faith, that we are living under the dispensation and personal guidance of the Holy Ghost. This Third Person of the blessed Trinity, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who is the Lord and giver of life, is present in the world to-day, in the world-wide Church, as really and truly as the Second Person, Jesus Christ, Son of the Virgin Mary, was present nineteen hundred years ago on the earth, and is still present on our altars in the Adorable Sacrament. Our Lord Himself promised that when the Paraclete should come he should abide always with the Church. He is not the less really present for our being unable to see Him with our eyes and touch Him with our hands.

Our blessed Lord, when He was visibly present on earth, dwelt with Mary and Joseph in that lowly cottage at Nazareth. He still dwells, though unseen by eyes of flesh, in our churches, on our altars. But the Holy Spirit dwells not in a temple made with hands. "Know you not," says the apostle, "that your bodies

are the temple of the Holy Ghost?" Yes, this poor tenement of clay, which death one day will dissolve, is the dwelling-place of God's Holy Spirit.

And now here is a thing to think of and to take to heart: As often as a Christian sins mortally he turns God's Holy Spirit out of his temple. To turn even the meanest of men out of one's own house without cause is shameful; to drive a man out of the house of which he is owner is open robbery. Judge, then, how heinous is mortal sin. He who is guilty of it drives God's Holy Spirit out of His dwelling-place. Let us not grieve the Holy Ghost; let us beware of quenching the Holy Ghost. Let us show due reverence to the temple in which He deigns to dwell, and treat in a befitting way this divine guest of our souls. So it will come to pass that when this house of our earthly dwelling is dissolved, He will receive us into His tabernacle — "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

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